AN EARNEST INVITATION TO THE SACRAMENT OF THE LORD'S Supper.

With Devotions, &c.

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TO THE

Right Reverend Father in God,

PETER,

Lord Bishop of

BATH and *WELLS*.

MY LORD,

I Addrest the first Edition of this little Book to Your Lordship, when You were newly declared Bishop of this Diocess; and what I then writ was to congratulate Your Lordship, and to signifie how happy I esteemed this Clergy and People, in such a relation. Your Lordship hath now govern'd several years among us, and fully answer'd the expectations of those that knew You, and the desires of those that

did not, in the wiſdom and juſtice of Your managements; ſo that at this time Acknowledgments are more proper than Congratulations; and particularly, we ought with humble thankfulneſs to own Your Lordſhips care and zeal for the great Intereſt of the Church, and Religion that I preſs in this Diſcourſe, the ſucceſs of which hath been very encouraging, and particularly in this place, where among about 1100 *Communicable perſons, Inhabitants of the Three Pariſhes within this City, I gave the Sacrament this laſt* Eaſter *to above* 800 *of them. I pray God to continue, and to increaſe this number; through his grace and help I hope to give yet a better account of the regularity of this People.*

I writ the Diſcourſe for their uſe, and it had gone no further if I could

have got Transcripts enough for them: In defect of such, I committed it to the Press, and understand since that God hath blest these poor endeavours in divers other places with success, much beyond my expectations.

I have often thought since of writing other little Manuals, concerning Hearing, Prayer, Meditation, *and such like, chiefly for the needs of those of mine own charge, with reference also to a more publick benefit; but my great and constant business of preaching twice a week, and attendance every day, and almost every hour of it, on the Church, or other services of his People, will not hitherto permit.*

These are Times in which our ut-

most diligence is necessary, not only for the reducing the Misled on the one hand, but for the exciting the Cold, and Unconcern'd on the other: And 'tis hard to say from which the Church hath suffer'd more, either the mistakes of Zeal, or the want of it. We, *Your Lordships Clergy of this Diocess, besides the other common considerations of Duty, and Spiritual rewards, have the Intentives of Your Lordships encouragement and example; and if we are remiss, our negligence will be inexcusable, and our guilt will be aggravated by our priviledge.*

My Lord, *I pray God give You further success in Your pious endeavours for the good of this poor, broken, and divided Church; and make all the Ministers of it, faithful, and*

industri-

industrious in their great, and most honourable Calling; that we may gain the favour and approbation of God, and then 'tis no matter how we are treated, or thought of by perverse and sensual Men. So ever prayeth,

My Lord,

Your Lordships

Most faithful and

most obedient Servant,

JOS. GLANVILL.

Dedication.

TO THE PEOPLE of my Charge.

My dear Neighbours,

ALthough *We* of the publick Ministry cannot expect to do *much* by our perswasions and endeavours in such an Age as *this*; Yet we ought to persevere in our work with Courage and Resolution, and not suffer our selves to be overborn by any difficulties, or discouragements what soever: For Duty belongs to us, but Events unto God, who will reward the Labourers whatever be the success of their Labours. And as every Minister of Religion ought to be Active and resolved in the *Work* and *Patience* of the Gospel; so he shall then best acquit himself in it, when he studies the *proper needs* of the Age, and place wherein he lives, and accordingly directs his endeavours to provide for them. Now there is

nothing, that I know, that is wanted more in our Days, than a due sense of the necessity and advantages of the Holy *Sacrament* of the *Lords Supper*, the general neglect, not to say contempt, of which, hath I am perswaded, been a great and sad occasion of the debauchery and divisions that are amongst us; and I verily think, that there could not be a more effectual means to reduce us to *Sobriety* and *Union*, than a frequent and reverend use of that divine Institution. From this perswasion I have earnestly, and often (as you can bear me witness) press'd this great Duty upon your Consciences, and affectionately recommended it to your practice. I have represented its *Nature* with all possible *plainness*, and urged its *Necessity* with a *Vigour* in some measure suitable to so great an occasion; I have told you the *danger* of wilful neglect on the one hand, and the *benefits* of due performance, on the other: But notwithstanding all, there are too many of you, that seem yet insensible, and

and unconcerned. I have publickly desired those that are either *ignorant* or *dissatisfied*, to accept of my private help and Instruction, and have offer'd them the utmost of my assistance for their better information and direction. And after all this, I know not what I can do more to serve you in this great interest of yours, except I put something into your hands that may be ever with you, and that you may consider on all occasions. *Publick Teachings*, by word of mouth, are too much looked upon as *customary exercises*, and on that account they lose their force with *some*; and the greatest part even of the better Auditors cannot keep their minds so close, and intent, to a Discourse *spoken*, as to receive it in its full evidence and power; on though the hearers are never so diligent and careful, our words are forgotten quickly, and the affections that they raise, vanish without any considerable effect upon their wills. For which reasons I have resolved upon this Course, to cast some of the plain

things,

things I have preach'd concerning the *Holy Sacrament* into writing; That those who are unfit for that great duty by reason of *Ignorance*, may have the propereſt means of Inſtruction that I can provide for them always in their power, and when they pleaſe, before their eyes: And that thoſe that *deprive* themſelves of the Benefits of this moſt excellent Ordinance, by reaſon of the *Miſtakes* of their erring underſtandings; may alſo have the moſt ſuitable help I can give, towards the ſetting their minds right, and the reconciling them to their Privilege, and their Duty.

For theſe purpoſes, I ſhall (as my manner is) repreſent what I have to ſay, in the moſt *diſtinct* and *eaſie* way I can contrive, avoiding all things that are *hard*, either in *notion* or *expreſſion*; and ſtrive, as near as is poſſible, to ſpeak all along to the moſt ordinary underſtandings. For I look upon *plainneſs* as the beſt dreſs for Truth, and my great care and endeavour conſtantly is, to be *underſtood*

by

by *all*, as far as the ſubject will bear.

In the purſuit of what I intend, I mean, by Gods help, to proceed in this order.

(1) I ſhall diſcourſe with all convenient brevity, and plainneſs, the *Nature* and *Deſign* of the *Lords Supper*. And,

(2) Give the General *Reaſons* to inforce the Duty; under which head, I ſhall apply my ſelf to two ſorts of Refuſers, *viz.* Thoſe that neglect (1) on the account of pure *careleſſneſs*, and *ſtupidity*, and (2) Thoſe that ſtand off upon the ſcore of *miſtakes* of *Conſcience*.

In treating with the former, I ſhall ſhew that their obſtinate refuſal takes off all pretence they can have to Chriſtianity, and puts them into the ſtate of Infidels and Heathens; yea into a *worſe* condition than *that* of *meer unbelievers*. As to the other ſort, *viz.* The *diſſatisfied* in *Conſcience*, I ſhall conſider their *Reaſons againſt Communicating* according to the way of our Church, and ſhew that they are no

juſtifiable

justifiable Grounds, why they should refuse to joyn with us in that solemn part of Christian worship.

CHAP. II.

I Begin with the *First*, The *Nature* of the *Lords Supper*. Concerning *this*, there hath been an infinite diversity of Opinions and Disputes; the effects of which differences have been much *Noise*, and many *Tumults*, *Schisms* and *Wars*, with a vast heap of mischiefs and calamities to the Christian World: I shall not therefore trouble you with any thing of needless controversie, or notion, on this argument; but state it so far only, as it relates to *practice*; And I shall take all I have to say about it from the *Word of God*, the best Rule to guide us in the Enquiry. And if *disputing* Men would have been content with *its* declarations in this matter, all this trouble and mischiefs had been avoided. But this hath

hath been the misery; some govern their thoughts of this Holy Institution by corrupt and *novel Traditions*, and others by meer vain and *arbitrary phancies*; Yea, Those who have been right in the main, have yet so mingled the plain truth with *allusions*, and spoken of it in such a *phantastical*, and *uncertain* way, that ordinary understandings have been confounded, and those that are for down-right sense, without the mixtures of imagination, have not been able to tell what to make of *that*, which they heard described in such a phanciful and various fashion. This particularly hath been my own case; I had heard men preach so humourſomly, and so diversly about the *Sacrament*; so much out of their *own* heads, and so *little* out of the *Oracles* of *God*, That I was quite bewildred and lost, and come at last to that pass, that I *knew nothing* at all of it, which ignorance, and confusion of thoughts, was the natural effect of such discourses; For when men once ramble in the way of *phrases*, *meta-*

met aphors, and *conceits*, as they lose themselves, so they perfectly dazle and amaze those others, whom they should instruct. I therefore betook my self to the *plain expressions* of *Scripture* concerning this matter; in *them* I found an ease account of the *nature* and *design* of this divine *Ordinance*. And whither shall we go to enquire after it, but to the words of *Institution* themselves? *These* I shall consider *first*, and then gather together those other passages of Scripture, which tend to the further explication of it.

1. The words of Institution are *Mat.* 26. [*Take, Eat, This is my Body.* v. 26. *And Drink ye all of it. For this is my Blood of the New Testament*, v. 27, 28.] To which is added in the Gospel of St. *Luke* [*Do this in Remembrance of me.*] Luke 22. 19. These words I shall severally explain, and then infer from them what is the *Nature* and *Design* of the holy Appointment.

Take, Eat, This is my Body——And, **This is my Blood**——Here I take notice, That **Body** and **Blood** do

do not relate to the *Bread* and *Wine*, but to the *Actions*, *Eat* and *Drink*, as appears plainly in the *Original. 'Tis not *this Bread*, and *this Wine*, are my *Body* and *Blood*, but *this Sacramental eating and drinking* of it. In *this* Christs *body* and *blood*, viz. His *Incarnation*, and *Sufferings* are represented to us. And yet by a Figure, the consecrated Elements may be call'd his *body* and *blood* also; so the *Form* at the eating the *Paschal Supper* was, *This is the bread of affliction which our Fathers did eat in Egypt*; Not the very same, but a *Memorial* of it, and the State of Bondage from which they were delivered. Thus, 1 *Cor.* 10. 3, 4. *Manna* is called *spiritual bread*, and the *Rock spiritual drink*, and that *Rock*, *Christ*: Not that they could possibly be so in the Letter, but they *signified* that *spiritual* food, and were tokens of Christs Presence. And thus the *Sacramental Bread* and *Wine* may be call'd his *Body* and *Blood*, that is, *Figures* and *Representations* of them; and that,

* Τοῦτο, not τοῦτος

that, not *barely* of his *Sufferings*, but (as the * Father notes) of all the Mysteries of the Incarnation which are *signified* and *included*. Thus anciently the Elements were call'd *Figures*, *Symbols*, *Images*, *sensible things* instead of *spiritual*, and we know 'tis in common use to call the *Picture* by the name of that it represents, as *this is a Man*, and *that a Bird* or *Beast*. So that there is no ground for the Doctrine of *Transubstantiation* in these words, as the *Roman* Church pretends. But I wave disputes, and come to the next expression to be consider'd.

* Basil.

[**This is the New Testament**, or * *Covenant* **in my Blood**] *viz.* The *Sign* and *Seal* of the *Covenant* made in his Blood; a *Covenant* wherein *God* engageth to bestow on us pardon of Sin, and Eternal *Life*; and *we* promise *faithful* and *sincere* obedience. Thus in the eldest times, *Eating*, and *Drinking* were *Covenant Rites*: As we may see in the compacts between *Isaac* and *Abime-*

* Διαθήκη.

Abimelech, Gen. 26. 30. And between *Jacob* and *Laban*, Gen. 31. 44, 46. So that the Sacrament is not a *bare Sign*, but 'tis the *Seal* of Gods gracious *Covenant* made with us in his Son.

[Do this in Remembrance of Me.] It hath always been usual to commemorate, and remember Benefactors and great Mercies by *Feasts* and *Festivals*. The Heathens had their * *Feasts* in memory of their *Heroes*; And the *Passeover*, a Type of *this* Supper, was appointed to preserve the memory of the *Israelites* deliverance out of *Egypt*, Exod. 12. 14. The *Lamb* was eaten with *bitter herbs*, to *commemorate* the *bitterness* of their servitude; the *Red-wine* was a Remembrance of their Blood which *Pharoah* spilt; and the *unleavened bread*, to remember them, that they carried such out of *Egypt* at their departure: And thus our blessed Saviour hath appointed this *holy Rite* to imprint upon us the *memory* of what he hath *done* and *suffered* for us, that

* *As*, αἰάκεια & αἰάντεια.

that we might not forget our Deliverance by him from a bondage greater than *Egyptian*.

And now from *these* main passages thus explain'd, 'tis easie to infer, That

The Sacrament of the Lords Supper is a Memorial Feast, **appointed for a solemn Remembrance of Christ our Lord**; **and a** Seal **of the** Covenant **that God hath made with us in him.**

Two things then it is principally designed for, (1) to *Remember* us of our Lord and Saviour, and (2) to be a *Seal* of the *Covenant* of Grace. Of each briefly.

(1) 'Tis for a Remembrance not *only* of his *Person*, or *only* of his *Sufferings*, or any other particular part of his Ministry; but we are by it required *thankfully* and *affectionately* to call to mind, *All* that he hath *done*, and *all* that he hath *suffer'd*; His *Life*, *Doctrine*, and *Laws*: His *Passion*, *Resurrection*, and *Ascension*; His *Victory* over *Sin*, *Death*, and *Hell*; and the *gracious Covenant* that God hath made with

with us through him: *These* are all included in his *Body* and *Blood*, (as I intimated before) of which the Holy Sacrament is a *Sign*, and *Memorial*: And the remembrance of *these*, which we are call'd to by the *Divine Institution*, is not *only* some *slight* and *passing* thoughts, but a *solemn* and most *serious* fixing of them upon our minds, in order to the inflaming of our affections with love, and our wills with resolution, that we may live answerably to that excellent Religion of the Holy Jesus which we profess.

(2) 'Tis the *Seal* of a *Covenant*, [*The New Testament in my Blood.*] The *Covenant* is, That God will give *pardon* of Sin, and Eternal *Life*, upon the conditions of *Faith* and *Repentance*. This *He seals* to us in the *Sacrament*, and assures us, that he, for *his* part, will make good *his Promises*; and we on *ours seal*, that we will endeavour to perform the *conditions*. So that the *Lords Supper* is a *Sacrament* by which we *confirm* those engagements we are entred into at *Baptism*. *Then* our *Sure-*

ties

ties undertook for us, that we should be faithful in the Covenant; and in *this* holy Ordinance we take all those obligations upon *our selves*, and in our *own* persons promise to act according to them.

This plainly, and in short, is the *Nature* and *Design* of the *Holy Sacrament*; concerning which there are some other expressions in Scripture, which I shall consider briefly, in order to the further explication of the Sacred Mystery. The chief are *these*.

'Tis called (1) *The Cup of blessing*, 1 Cor. 10. 16. (2) *The Communion of the Body and Blood of Christ*, 1 Cor. 10. 16. And in the Duty 'tis said (3) *That we shew the Lords Death*, 1 Cor. 11. 26.

(1) **The Cup of Blessing**, *viz.* Of *Praise* and *Thanksgiving*. Our Saviour, *Mat.* 26. *Gave thanks* when he took the *Cup*. The Jews used to conclude their *Paschal* Supper with a Cup of Wine, at which time they sung an Hymn, and therefore call'd it the

Cup

Cup of *Praising* and **Blessing*. And the Heathens also after their Feasts had their * *Cups* of *Praise* to their gods; which some take to be the *Cup* of *Devils* mention'd by the Apostle, 1 *Cor*. 10. 21. So that by this we are taught to remember our Lord at his Table, with *praise* and *grateful* acknowledgments: And therefore the Ancients from hence call'd the *Lords Supper*, the *Holy Eucharist*, namely, a *Feast* of *Thanksgiving*, and the Solemnity was always attended with an Hymn of Praise.

*Ποτήριον ὑμνήσεως καὶ εὐλογίας.

* Ἀγαθοῦ δαίμονος, & διὸς σωτῆρος.

(2) **Communion** (or *Communication) **of the Body and Blood of Christ**, *viz*. The *Sacrament* is a Sacred *Rite*, in which God *communinates* and imparts to all worthy Receivers, the *Benefits* of Christs *Incarcation*, and *Sufferings*. He doth then *ratifie*, *confirm*, and *solemnly* exhibit them,

* Κοινωνία.

them, to those that duly attend upon that Divine Appointment.

(3) [As often as ye eat——ye do shew the Lords death] *viz.* (1) *Declare* unto *men*, with joy and glorying, that we believe he *dyed* for *such* purposes, and that he hath procured inestimable *benefits* for us by his Death. That therefore we will adhere, and stick unto him; and that neither *death, nor life shall seperate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.* And (2) Imports our shewing and declaring *this* also unto *God*, and pleading it with him for his *pardon*, and his *grace*, for the sake of that meritorious Passion which we set forth, and commemorate. These passages fall under the account I have before given of the Ordinance, and shew *how* we are to *Remember* our Lord in it, and *what* we may expect in so doing.

Thus briefly of the *Nature* and *Design* of the Sacrament. I might have run the matter into a large Discourse, but I resolve on brevity. In what I have said, you will find all things that are

are *neceſſary* and *eſſential* to the *Ordinance*; For the *nicities* and *diſputes* that are about it, you need not trouble your ſelves with them; But ſo *much* of it as I have repreſented (I mean in the ſubſtance of the particulars) 'tis fit you ſhould know: And therefore I intreat you, eſpecially thoſe of the more ordinary underſtandings, to return back and fix your thoughts a while upon thoſe periods; and read them over and again, till you have a *cleer* and *diſtinct* apprehenſion of the Subject they explain. I know the thoughts of moſt are very *confuſed*, and much in the *dark* about it, and while they are *ſo*, they cannot demean themſelves as they ought in the performance of the Duty, nor receive thoſe benefits that otherwiſe they might from it. I beſeech you therefore not to content your ſelves with a *ſingle*, and *running* reading; Many Divine Truths will not enter into our minds at *firſt* ſight; or if they do, they are gone as ſoon as they are received: Though they are never ſo *plainly* ex-

prest, yet they many times *seem dark*, till we look again; or though they strike our minds fully, yet they pass out of Memory, except we reflect, and think them over; I hope therefore you will do your selves this right; And I thus urge you to consideration of my accounts, not as if I fancied I had made any *discoveries* in them, which were not made before; (No, *These* are known things among the intelligent sort of Christians) But I do it, because I speak to the *meaner*, and *less improved* understandings. And perhaps from the Representation of the affair which I have given, the *others* also may receieve the advantage of a clearer order and method to their thoughts, and be deliver'd from many *unnecessary* and *uncertain notions* that they have imagined to be of great consequence to be believed and known, when either they are not *true*, or not *considerable*.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

I Come now to the main thing I design, *viz.* (II) To *urge* this great Duty which I have thus explain'd, and to do what I can to perswade you to the conscientious practice of it. Now there are two things that commonly oblige men to action, namely, Considerations of **Duty**, and of **Interest**. And there are *both* here in the highest degree, to engage us. I shall discourse of each.

(1) We have the Motive, and Reason of **Duty**, and *Duty* in *such* Circumstances, as have the greatest Obligation in them. A *LORD*, who hath all *right* to our obedience both by *nature*, and by *dear purchase*, hath *commanded* us to do *this*. And, A *SAVIOUR*, who hath rescued us from the Jaws of Hell and Death, and hath procured for us endless life and glory; hath *required* it of us. Here is the *Authority* of *just Power*, and the *Obliga-*

tion of *astonishing Love*. We are bound by the *submissions* we owe a *Sovereign Lord*, and by the *gratitude* we owe an adorable *Benefactor*. The *Son* of *God*, the *King* of *both* the *Worlds*, The *Redeemer* of Men, 'tis *He* that *commands*, and his *Commandments* are not *grievous*; had he put upon our necks a yoke heavier than the *Jewish Ceremonies*, had he injoyn'd a *greater* number of *costly* and *laborious* Rites than those, and required so many of such services from us, as would have taken up *all* our *time*, and imployed *all* our *strength*, and wearied *all* our *powers*; Yet these we ought to have observed without *repining*, and thought all but *small* homage to his Greatness, and small acknowledgment of his Love. *All these* had been *nothing* in compare with what he hath done for us *freely* without merit or obligation; *Nothing*, to his leaving the bosom of the Father, and the glories of the upper world, and the Hallelujahs of the blessed; *Nothing*, to his descending to a world of Infamy and woe; *Nothing*, to his

suffering

ſuffering the ſcorns and contradictions of Sinners, the death of the Croſs, and the wrath of God: So that we had been wretchedly ungrateful ſhould we have ſtuck at any of *theſe*, or as much as *murmured* at them: But our Lord hath not given us any ſuch tryal of our Love, and obedience; He hath deliver'd the world from the Yoke of Ceremonial bondage; And (beſides *Baptiſm*) hath appointed but *this one Rite* for us to obſerve; A *Rite*, that is neither *troubleſome*, nor *coſtly tedious*, nor *laborious*. And what Prodigies of baſeneſs ſhall we make our ſelves, if we refuſe to take notice of this his *gracious* Inſtitution? With what face can we look up and call our ſelves by his name? How ſhamefully are we upbraided by the practice of *thoſe* we count *barbarous*? Let us look abroad into the world and conſider the moſt *brutiſh Idolaters*; *They* will *cut* their beloved *fleſh*, and *burn* their deareſt children, and ſometimes ſuffer themſelves to be *cruſh'd to death* by the Carriages that bear their *Idols*, be-

cauſe their *Infernal* Gods require, and are pleaſed with, ſuch teſtimonies of their homage: Hath the *Devil* ſuch *obſequious* ſervants? Are thoſe *Cruel Rites*, which he appoints, obſerved with ſo much duty? Will thoſe poor wretches do, and ſuffer any thing, rather than diſpleaſe their *ugly Dieties*? And are we *Chriſtians*, Profeſſing Servants of the *Son* of *God*, our *Sovereign* and *Redeemer*, and do we neglect *this* his *main*, *juſt*, and *gracious* Appointment? Is *this* too much to do for him? And do we owe him ſo much *leſs* than *Cannibals* do their *Idols*? Certainly thoſe men of the *Deſart*, thoſe *wild Savages* of the Woods, ſhall riſe up in *judgment* with ſuch a *Generation* of pretending *Chriſtians*, and ſhall condemn it. Methinks their *diligence* and *exactneſs* in thoſe hard and painful ſervices, ſhould cover us with bluſhing and confuſion, at our careleſneſs and neglect of the eaſie Duty our Lord requires from us: And we ſhall ſee great reaſon to be aſhamed of our Omiſſions; if we conſider,

That

That our bleſſed Redeemer had lived a life of *poverty* and *diſhonour* for our ſakes: He had inſtructed us in the way of Happineſs by his excellent *Doctrine* and *Precepts*, and had gone before us in an incomparable *Example*; And now he was juſt about to *compleat* his *Love*, by *offering* himſelf unto *Death*, to deliver us from *it*, and thereby to give an Inſtance of the moſt amazing goodneſs that ever was: At *this time* he enjoyns his Diſciples to do ſomething in *remembrance* of him. And *Lord!* What is *ſufficient to be done* in memory of ſuch *Love?* Had he required the deareſt of our blood, and the *choiceſt* of our *ſubſtance* to be offered to him in acknowledgment, ſhould we have thought *ſuch* Demands *unreaſonable?* Would ordinary ingenuity have ſcrupuled to make thoſe Sacrifices for ſuch kindneſs? But he calls not for *theſe*, He looks for no *firſt-born* of our *Bodies*, not *chief* of our *Flocks*; No, He appoints only a *Feaſt of Memorial*, and commands us to remember his Love in *that*: And

shall we not observe him in so *small a matter?* Hath he not *deserv'd* to be *remembred* by us, or do we know any *better* way, to signifie our remembrance of him, than *that* which himself hath prescribed? Should we not do as much as *this*, at the request of an *ordinary* dying Friend? And is not the *greatest* and the *best* that ever Creatures had, worthy of such a *Testimony* of *Affection* from us? I am sure there is no one can be so brutish as to deny the *justness* of the *Duty*, and methinks none should be so unworthy as to refuse compliance with it. I beseech you therefore, if the *Considerations* of *Duty* can do any thing with you: If there be any *Obligation* in the *highest Authority*, if there be any *Allurement* in the *sweetest Love*; if your *profession* of *subjection* to *Christ* be not only a *Complement*, and if he have any real interest in your Souls, give this proof then of your *being in earnest*; *that*, which you would be *thought*; refuse no more of his Invitations, neglect no more of his Calls; consider the *expressness* of his Com-

Command, and that *this* Law is *peculiarly his*: *His* in such a sense as (*Baptism* excepted) *no other Law is*. For his *other* Injunctions are but *Enforcements* of the Laws that God hath written in the *Old Scriptures*, and in our hearts; but this is his own proper Commandment; by obeying him in *this*, we particularly own him as our *Law-giver*, and by refusing we *renounce* him.

But if the *Considerations* of *Duty* should not prove so powerful with you, there are others which generally use to be of more force, namely, *those* taken from our *Interest*. And here,

(II) I desire you to consider the great *Benefits* that a worthy Communicant receives from the holy Sacrament. *This* is not a meer barren Ceremony, or unprofitable Rite, but an Instrument and Means to produce and to convey unspeakable blessings to us. Here we receive,

(1) *Confirmation* of our *Faith*: All habits are increas'd by being exercised, and this Ordinance requires great *exercises*

ercises of the Grace of Faith: For here we make a *solemn* Declaration of it, and thereby bind it stronger upon our Souls. And to the exercise of this *Divine Grace*, and the sincere and publick profession of it, there is no doubt but God will super-add his special aid and blessing, that out of *weakness it may be made strong*. So that if your Faith be *weak* and *trembling*, if you are perplext with vexations, doubts, and temptations to unbelief, apply your selves to this holy Ordinance as to the proper remedy. *Declare* your Faith, and *pray* for more. If you *believe*, God will help your *unbelief*, Mark 9.25.

(2) Our *Repentance* will be heightned by our due Communicating at the Lords Table, and that in respect of all its great Acts, *viz.* 1. *Sense* and *sorrow* for Sin. 2. *Confession* of it; and 3. *Aversation* from it. For the first,

(1) The *evil* of Sin is never so well discerned as in its effects. It is *sweet* in the *mouth*, but *bitter* in the *belly*: And there is no greater evidence of its vile-

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ness and malignity, than *that* we have in the sufferings of our Lord, which are set before us in the holy Sacrament. And certainly Sin must needs be an *accursed* thing (saith the considering Communicant). That the *blessed Jesus* must thus be made a *Curse* for it; that is doubtless a mighty evil, that cannot be expiated but by the blood of God: And Sin, without question, hath unspeakable malignity in it, since it laid such a load of wrath upon the Shoulders of Omnipotence, as made him complain, and sweat, and groan, and dye. The good man hath never such a sense of the evil of sin, as when he is awakened by the *signs* and *images* of Christ's *Sufferings*, and when he sees it writ in *Characters* of *Blood*. Besides, the *baseness* and *ingratitude* of Sin is made evident in all the Representations of the Divine Love which we have at the Lords Table: We see *there*, that it is an abuse of the greatest and most tender Goodness, and there is nothing that more affects ingenuous Souls, than the sense of such unworthiness,

thineſs, and this will beget the *liveliest* and moſt *kindly* ſorrow. *They ſhall look on me whom they have pierced, and they ſhall mourn*, Zech. 12. 10. The *tenderest* grief ariſeth from the apprehenſion of *abuſed Goodneſs*: And the more ingenuous Spirits are ſooner brought to be troubled for their ſins, by a ſenſe of *Mercy* than of *Terrors*. Now there is nothing that gives a truer or greater Repreſentation of *Divine Grace* and *Kindneſs*, than the *Holy Sacrament*, and therefore *this* is a very effectual means to beget and increaſe a *penitential ſenſe* and *ſorrow* for ſin. And upon this,

(2) Follows *Confeſſion*, which is one expreſſion of *theſe*: The apprehenſion of an *angry Majeſty* drives a Sinner to Deſperation, and prevents his Confeſſion. When the Lord askt the Man in the Goſpel with ſome ſeverity, *How cameſt thou hither, not having a wedding Garment?* He was *ſpeechleſs*. Terrors beget ſtupifying fear, which ſtops the mouth, and dams up all the paſſages to, and from

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the Soul, whereas the Diſcoveries of Goodneſs and Mercy open the heart, and melt the Seal upon the Lips: They invite Supplications, and beget Confeſſions, and therefore the *Sacrament*, which is a *Memorial* of the greateſt, ſweeteſt, and freeſt Mercy, tends in the nature of it to the producing humble confeſſions and acknowledgments: And it doth it likewiſe,

(3) As to the *Averſation* of *Repentance* by the ſame way. The top and perfection of *Repentance* is to *turn* from our *evil ways*; God invites his People to *this*, by the Argument that is moſt powerfully preſs'd upon us in the *Sacrament*, namely, *That of his pardoning mercy and kindneſs. Return thou backſliding* Iſrael, — *and I will not cauſe mine anger to fall upon you*, Jer. 3. 12. His readineſs to pardon is the great Motive to return, and the *Sacrament* is the *Seal* of the *Covenant* of *Pardon*. Deſpair of Mercy keeps men on in a ſinful courſe. *Thou ſayeſt there is no hope*, ſay they in the Prophet *Jer.* 2. 25. They thought their caſe deſperate,

rate, and it follows, *I have loved strangers, and after them will I go.* The Devils persist irreclaimably in their hatred of God and Goodness, because the unalterable Sentence is past upon them: And if men come once to quit their hopes of Happiness, they will also in a short time quit the thoughts of God and Virtue, and give themselves up to the swinge of their Appetites and Inclinations. Whereas on the other side, *Hope* is the great *Encouragement* and *Spring* of *Endeavour*, and where *this* is enlivened by a *full* and *quick* sense of pardoning Goodness, that Soul will feel a *mighty Motive* to reform and turn from Sin. Now the *Sacrament* is the *Seal* of *that Covenant* which assures us of Grace and Pardon, and the firmest ground of our best hopes, and most glorious expectations. Thus the Grace of *Repentance* receives increase in *all* its *Exercises*, from this *Divine Institution*: And so doth,

(3) That other most excellent Grace, *Love*, both as it relates, 1. to God,

God, and 2. to our Neighbour.

(1) In the *Holy Sacrament* the *Myſteries* of *Divine Love* are unfolded in all their Circumſtances of Wonder. There we ſee *pardoning*, *redeeming*, *bleeding*, *dying Love*: *Love*, ſuffering for all our ſakes; and *Love* procuring all things for our Intereſts; *Love* deſcending to the *Grave* and *Hell*, and *Love* triumphing over both: *Love* leading *Captivity captive*, and *obtaining gifts for men*, Light, Life, and a glorious Immortality. *Such Love*, and *Love* beyond what we can *ſay*, and beyond what we can *think*, is repreſented at the *Holy Sacrament*, and *this* muſt needs fire every Soul that is not as cold as the Earth, and as dead as the Grave. Love begets love, and one Flame kindles another. And if we think of this Love, and conſider it as we ought when we come to the entertainment of Love, this would excite our Affections, and turn our Souls into holy Flames, and ſo our *dead* Powers will *live*, and our dull ſleepy affections will awake into new ſpirit and vigour:

vigour: We shall live by Love, and act by Love, till we are received into the earnest Embraces of Love, and and swallowed up in that immense Ocean of Love. Now *Love* is the *best* and most *pleasing* of all our *passions*; and *Love* to God is the *best* and most *pleasant* of all *loves*: A *Love* free from those Tortures and Disquiets, that shame and those griefs that are produced by absence and uncertainties, loss and guilt, when this Passion is placed upon other Objects. This Love is the Fountain of Delight, and the Spring of Action that sweetens our Troubles, and stirs up our Endeavours; that makes Duty agreeable, and Difficulties easie, that is a *present* Heaven, and the foretaste of a *greater*. This also, (2) tends to the increasing our Love one to another. It is a *Feast* of *Love* at our *Fathers House*, and our *Lords Table*: The *Guests* are *Brethren*, and professing *Children* of *Love*. Here are all the Engagements to love set before us: The *Love* of our *Lord*, and

and his expreſs Commandment, *John* 13.34. The *Relations* we ſtand in to God, and to one another. We cannot well chuſe but *pity* our *Brothers Infirmities*, and *pardon* each others *faults*, when we ſee how much God hath pitied our *Miſeries*, and how *graciouſly* he hath *pardoned* our *Offences*. Our Animoſities will be abated, and our thoughts of Malice and Revenge will dye. Our Indifferences will be *kindneſs*, and our kindneſs *Love*, when we conſider the inexpreſſible *Love* of our *common Lord*, and the bleſſed *effects* of that *love*: *Reconciliation* made, *Happineſs* procur'd, and *Sin*, and *Death*, and *Hell* conquered. A ſenſe of *theſe* will ſwallow up all our little *picks* and *diſpleaſures*, and ſo fill us with the thoughts of *Gratitude* and *Love*: That we ſhall forget our *Enmities*, and imbrace our Enemies, and ſhed abroad our kindneſs upon all about us, yea and extend it to all the World in *prayers* and *good wiſhes*. And now, this *Spirit* of *Charity* is a moſt *divine temper*, and a great happineſs: 'Tis a *ſweet*, *ſerene*,

rene, and *pleaſant* thing, a *Reward* to its ſelf, if there were no other: Whereas *Envy* and *Malice*, and all the *degrees* of them are an Hell, and Torment to the Soul; they are great ſins and their own puniſhment: And a right uſe of the Holy Sacrament will abate, and remove *theſe*, and therein alſo adminiſter bleſſed and unſpeakble *Advantages* to us.

(4) Our *Hopes* are *nobly advanced* and *ſtrengthened* by this *Ordinance:* When the good man conſiders the *Juſtice* and *Holineſs* of *God*, and the *perfection* of his *Law*; and then takes a view of his own *ſinfulneſs*, and innumerable *imperfections:* His Spirits fail, and his Hope is giving up the Ghoſt; he ſinks into Trouble, and almoſt into the Regions of Deſpair: Now all the Relief that a man can have in ſuch a ſtate, is to be drawn from Gods *Covenant to pardon ſin*, and to *accept of Faith* and *Repentance* inſtead of *Perfection.* This is the Tenour of the Goſpel, and the Foundation of our Hopes! and this *Covenant* is *ſealed* and *aſſured* to us

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at the *Sacrament*; ſo that thence the *fainting Soul* may derive *life* and *quickning*. And when the drooping Chriſtian comes from ſeeing God putting his *Seal* to his *Pardon*, and to the *Promiſes* made him of *Eternal Life*; his Hopes recover, and his Spirits return unto him, his Soul leaps for joy, and all his Powers are full of Content and Pleaſure. And over and above *this*, God is pleaſed at *ſuch* times *eſpecially*, to vouchſafe more abundant *Manifeſtations* of *himſelf* to the Soul, *ſealing* his love upon it, and giving it ſo much aſſurance as may deliver it from its unreaſonable doubts and ſuſpicions, and make it in part partaker of our Maſters joy. But this will be a Particular by it ſelf. Therefore,

(5) The *holy Sacrament* is an excellent means to heighten a Chriſtians *Joy* and *Comfort*. For *there* we are in a *ſpecial exerciſe* of our *Graces*, and by *them* are *prepared* for *Divine peace and pleaſure*: *That peace of God, which paſſeth all underſtanding*, Phil. 4. 7. And *this* is ſomething *more* than *that* con-

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tent that naturally ariseth upon, and results from the Actions of Holiness and Virtue, and is superadded by the nearer Applications of the Spirit of God to the Soul: This pleasure and satisfaction God is always willing to bestow upon us, but we by our sins indispose our selves for it, and it is not to be given out but to *prepared Souls*: And now according to the *greater* or *less degrees* of our *preparations*, and exercise of our *Graces*, we shall have *more* or *less* of this *spiritual joy* and *satisfaction* in our Communions. But besides the joy which is *special* and *extraordinary*, the *Ordinance* in its own nature tends to *delight* and *pleasure*. We had raised Storms and Tempests by our Sins, and provoked him whom we can neither resist nor avoid: His Countenance was full of dread and terrours, and Death and Hell stood ready for the command to seize upon us: And must it not needs fill those with joy and transport, that were just now in this dreadful state, when they shall see the Heavens cleered, and the Storms gone,

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to behold smiles and love in the faces of the offended Majesty; to be assured that he is *reconciled*, and his Arms are open to receive us: That *Hell* and *Death* are destroyed, and *Life* and *Happiness* procured for us? All these are set before us in the Holy Sacrament, and did we use it as we ought, our Souls would be transported with joy, and we should have a delightful foretaste of the happiness and triumph of the Blessed, and all our Lives would be *Anthems* of *Praise* and *Acclamation* to the adorable Author and Procurer of our Blessings. And this,

(6) Is another happy advantage we derive, or may do, from the holy Sacrament, *viz.* That it heightens and spirits our *Gratitude* and *Praises*. Praise and acknowledgments of *Divine Favours*, are all the Return we can make for them; and we are to offer up these Sacrifices for our selves, and all the other Creatures. But the *Commonness* of our Mercies takes away the *sense* of them, and we pass them over with *slight* and *customary* acknowledgments:

ments: This ordinarily is our courſe, and 'tis a very diſingenuous and ungrateful carriage to the bountiful Author of our Beings and Bleſſings: But now at the Holy Sacrament, *Divine Favours* are *particularly* and *ſolemnly* repreſented, our remembrance awakened, and our affections excited; and the devout Soul pours it ſelf forth into holy Euchariſt, and Thankſgiving. The *Heart is full*, and the *Mouth flows*; all the *Powers rejoyce*, and in rejoycing breaks forth into *Songs of Praiſe*: And ſo begins that *bleſſed Employment*, which ſhall be the *Work* and *Happineſs* of *Heaven*.

Thus we ſhall receive *Increaſe* to our *Graces* and our *Comforts*, from the frequent and due uſe of the *Holy Sacrament*, and all *other ſpiritual advantages* are contained under *theſe*. And as by *theſe particulars* we may *encourage* our ſelves to our duty, ſo *in* them likewiſe we may ſee how we are to *demean* our ſelves in the diſcharge of it: *What acts* we are to *exerciſe*, and by *what conſiderations* we may ſtir up

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our *Graces*, inflame our *Affections*, and ſtrengthen our *Reſolutions*.

And now the *Benefits* that I have repreſented to encourage and invite you to the *holy Sacrament*, do not only concern the *thorow* and *grown Chriſtian*, but even *all* that own the Profeſſion of Chriſts Religion, and have not renounc'd their *Baptiſmal Engagements* by *lewdneſs* and *impiety*: For ſuch have *ſome degrees* of *Faith*, *Love*, *Repentance*, and other *Virtues*: But the unhappineſs is, that *theſe*, in the moſt, are very low, imperfect, and in a degree that will not ſecure their condition: *Theſe Graces* muſt be advanced to *nobler meaſures*, and to *ſuch degrees*, as may *prevail* over the *contrary habits* and *diſpoſitions*: Till the matter comes to this, *we are under the Law, and a ſpirit of bondage*; in a condition of *impotency* and *weakneſs*, and not arrived to the *glorious Liberty and Power of the Sons of God*. *This*, all that profeſs the *Chriſtian Faith* and *Hopes*, ought to aim at, and endeavour after; and the *Sacrament* is the moſt *proper* and *likely meaus* for

for the advancing of our *imperfect graces* to that noble height. So all that professing Christians are concerned in the Duty, and capable of the Benefits. And to all those that have *such* thoughts, and *such* desires, the *Considerations* I have presented will be of moment. But for the rest that are *careless* and *unconcerned*, *dead* to such *spiritual* Motives, and *stupidly careless* of the *duty* and the *priviledges* that attend it. They are *not Christians*, but do as much as in them lyes, to renounce their Religion, and to put themselves into the condition of Heathens and professed Infidels. This is that I come next to discourse.

CHAP. IV.

After all my perswasions, and more earnest Endeavours, I have too much cause to think, that some among you neglect the holy Ordinance, not for any *reason* that they have,

have, or can as much as *pretend*, but from meer *brutish stupidity* and *unconcernment*. They *care not for these things:* the *Motives* of *Religion* and *another World* can do *nothing* with them; such *considerations* are not *felt*, but past over their Souls without making any impressions on them. And now, as for *such*, I am come to shew, That they *disclaim Christ* and his *Religion*, and are by no means to be reckoned into the number of *Christians*. This I prove by the following Particulars.

First, They renounce a main Article of the *Creed*, viz. *The Communion of Saints*, their *Communion* with (1) *Christ*, and their *Communion* with (2) *one another*.

(1) Christ invites us to his *Table*, and provides a *spiritual entertainment* for us; and in that there is a *solemn* and *special intercourse* between *him* and his *Church*, which on *our part* consists in the *exercise* of our *Graces*; and on *his*, in the *Benefits* and *Blessings* he bestows. He invites us to come and to

meet him *there*, to enjoy *spiritual Correspondence* and *Communion* with him: And now, *wilfully* to refuse the Invitation, is to signifie our *contempt* of the *Holy Jesus*, and so declare that we care not for any nearness of correspondence with him. And such Neglecters in effect say, that they love the converse and communion of their vain and vicious company: That they can spend their time *pleasantly* in *their* conversation, upon an Ale-bench, or place of Idleness, or Debauches: But for *Christ Jesus* they *like* not his *company*, and care not for any intimacy or acquaintance with him. This is the direct language of such practices, and neglects; and what kind of *Christians* are *such* as *these?*

(2.) They renounce the *Communion* of *Saints one among another*. The holy *Sacrament* is the *Feast* of *Charity* and *Christian Love*, and *there* our Affections are united to God, and to our Brethren. *There* we profess to be of *one Body, one Society*, and to be all *Members one of another*. So that those who neglect

neglect and refuse this holy *Symbol* of *Love*, break off from the *Society* of *Christians*, and declare they will have nothing to do with them, as far as they are concerned in that Name and Relation: That they will not be of the Flock and Number that Christ calls *His*, but would rather have their lot with the World, and Herd of Mankind, who are strangers to the *Covenant of Promise*; *without hope, and without God in the world*, Ephes. 2. 12. That they value not *their Priviledges*, nor care for their *hopes*. This is the meaning of their neglect, and *such* Christians are the willful Refusers.

(2) They renounce their *Baptism*. *This* is the Sacrament of *Entrance* into *Christianity*, and here *Engagements* are laid upon us without our knowledge or consent. At the Sacrament of the Lords Supper we *solemnly engage* and *take* those *Obligations* upon *our selves*. If we refuse to do *this*, we *withdraw* our *consent* from what was done in our stead; we make our *Baptism* void, and put our selves into the state of *Infidels*

and *Heathens*. The *Indians* were by the *Spaniards* driven to *Baptism* in droves like Cattel to the water, without knowing what it meant, or what they did in it: Were these *Christians* by virtue of such a Baptism? Especially, is there any reason to think *those* of them such, who as soon as they were free, made open declarations against it. And are *those* among us *Christians*, who were *signed* with that *Religion* when they could not *help* it? and profess against it by their actions and neglects, as soon as they are in *capacity* to do it? who *disown* it when they are *solemnly* called to put their *Seal*, and to declare their allowance and approbation? Their *Sureties* engaged for them that they should *believe* the *Christian Faith*, *keep* Gods *Commandments*, and *renounce* the *World*, the *Flesh*, and the *Devil*: But say *those* by their practice, what had *they* to do to undertake such things for us? we will stand to no such engagements: We are call'd on to make this good our selves in person at the other Sacrament,

ment, or by our neglects to declare it void: But we will not tie our ſelves, or own any ſuch engagements upon us: we will leave our ſelves at large to believe what we pleaſe, and to practice what we fancy, and to gratifie and worſhip as long as we think fit, the World, the Devil, and the Fleſh our Friends, and deareſt Correſpondents. All this likewiſe is plainly ſignified in the neglect of the Holy Sacrament; and therefore certainly ſuch are no better Chriſtians than the wild men of *America*: Which will further appear, if we conſider,

(3) That by it they deny the very *profeſſion* of *Chriſt Jeſus*; They will not ſo much as claim nor pretend to him, in any *ſolemn ſignificant* way. To ſay that we are *Chriſtians*, and now and then to hear a *Sermon*, theſe are not *profeſſion* enough: They are but cold *declarations* of our *Opinion*, no good ſignifications of our *Faith*. The right profeſſion of *Chriſtianity* is made, by our preſenting our ſelves at the Lords Table, and owning our *Faith* there,

that is a solemn and publick confession and acknowledgment. To hear Sermons is too often but curiosity or custom, to say we are of the Christian Religion, is but a declaring in what way we have been brought up; and meer *Education-Faith* is but a faint unsignifying thing; it is but Opinion, and a low degree of assent. 'Tis true, a man may be a *Formalist* and an *Hypocrite* when he comes to the Lords Table, as well as in other lower significations of his Religion. But however he makes a *profession*, and *that* which is *proper* and *solemn*: Whereas the *wilfully negligent*, refuse to make any due confession of Christ and his Religion: *They openly deny him before men, and such he will deny before his Father which is in Heaven*, Mat. 10. 33. To withdraw from the *Profession* of *Christianity* in times of *difficulty* and *persecution* is a great sin; but 'tis such a one as admits of some *extenuation* from the *frailty* of *humane nature*, and the *temptations* of *fear* and *self-love*: But to *deny* the *profession* of Christ in times of

of *Liberty* and *encouragement*, this is an *affront* to the *Holy Jesus*, for which there is no *shadow* of *excuse*, and must arise from *contempt*, and a confest *neglect* of him. Such persons publish to the world, that they own *nothing* of *Religion*, but count it a disparagement to be thought any way concern'd for it. And so are by no means to be accounted Christians. Further,

(4) Their refusal and neglect is a quitting and renouncing the *whole Covenant* that God hath made with Sinners in his Son. *The Covenant* on *Gods part* offers *Grace* and *Glory*, and on *ours*, it binds to *Faith* and *sincere Obedience*. We are called to the Sacrament to see God *confirming* what he hath promised, and assuring us to make good what concerns *him*: On the other side, we are to present our selves *there*, to profess our readiness and resolution, to perform *our part*, to keep the terms to which we were ingaged, and upon which we expect the promised Blessings. Now if we wilfully refuse this *Confirmation*, we with-

draw our selves from the *Covenant*, and declare that Grace and Glory, are things that we neither *care for*, nor expect; and that we will not tie our selves to any *Faith* or *Homage*; but would be as free as we can to follow the *Devil* and our *Lusts*; and so are very far from being *Christians*.

CHAP. V.

I Have thus briefly shewn you what is *signified* and *implyed* in the *neglect* of the *Holy Sacrament*. Many of you that are guilty of this sin, would I suppose be loth *openly*, and in *words*, to *renounce* Christ and his Religion; and yet while you continue in this obstinate, dangerous neglect, you *do it* as *fully* as if your Tongues declared against that Name and Profession. And I think when any such as *these* turn *Papists*, *Turks*, or *Jews*, they do but change to some *shew* of Religion, from none at all. So that it is no *real* disparagement,

ragement, or loss to our Church, when those Infidels declare in *words*, what before they sufficiently signified by their *practice*. *They go out from us, because they were never of us*, 1 John 2. 19. They do not *change* their *Religion*, for they had never any before which they might exchange.

This, Sirs, in serious truth is, the condition of those that *wilfully* refuse and neglect the Duty of *Holy Communion*: And methinks it should make such tremble to consider, that they live in a *profest* and *impudent* contempt of God. You pity *Heathens* and ignorant *Americans*; but there is work enough for your pity at home, and their condition certainly is not worse than the condition of those careless negligent Sinners among our selves. Yea, the Apostle tells us, That 'tis *better never to have known the way of truth, than after we have known it to turn away from the Holy Commandment*, 2 Pet. 2. 21. And our Saviour saith, *It shall be more tolerable for the dark* Tyre *and* Sidon *at judgment, than for the enlightned*

Capernaum *and* Bethsaida, *Math.* 11. 22. We think their condition dreadful that say, *there is no God*, and no doubt it is *so*: And certainly *their* state is not *less* deplorable, That acknowledge *there is a God*, but *desie* him, and carry the matter *so*, as if in *good earnest* there were *no such being*. To live at large without the serious profession of *some Religion* is *brutish* and *unnatural*: And such *Savages* deserve not to continue in the societies of *men*, but are fitter to range among the wild Beasts of the Woods: *Such* are those among us, that never make any solemn profession of *any Religion*, by *any act* of their *own*: They have *no Religion*, but that of their *Climate*, which they neither understand nor mind: They are *Christians* by the *Christianity* of others; (*viz.* the *general profession* of their *Countrey*) or they are *none* at all; and if they live and dye in this condition, *wild men* and *Cannibals* will at the *last* be in a *better state* than *they*.

And now, Sirs, *Reason* for this *carelessness* and *dangerous neglect*, I am sure you

you have none; Nor do the sort I am now dealing with, pretend *Scruples* of *Conscience*: But some *Excuses* there are, (which you know are but *vain*) that you use upon occasion, to take off the edge of reproof, and to seem justified in the sight of men.

Thus they that were invited to the *Supper* in the *Parable*, Luke 14. 18. made *Excuses*; One had *bought Ground*, and he must see it; a second had *bought Oxen*, and he must *try them*; and a third had *married a Wife*, and *could not come*. None of these *pretences* had any good reason in them; they were *something* to say, and had a little *colour*, but they were not the *Causes* of their not coming to the *Supper*; No, the *true ground* was their *contempt* of the *Master*, and his *Invitation*: And therefore *Matth.* 22. 3. 'Tis said, *They would not come*; Their *excuses* were looked on as *flat denyals*, and the Reason is given after: It was not their *Ground*, nor their *Oxen*, nor their *Marriage*; but their *dis-esteem* of the Lord, and his Feast, *They made light of it*, vers. 5. But

But though these excuses were not *good*, yet they had something *specious* in them: 'Twas *business*, and *considerable* occasions that were alledg'd. And *such* Affairs they *really* had; for 'tis said in St. *Matthew*, that *they went their ways, one to his Farm*, and *another to his Merchandise*; so that there was *something true* in their *Pleas*, though the *main thing* for which they were brought, was *false*. But now, if they had sent word, that the *Lords House* was so *far off*, that they were not *able* to go to it, though really it were within some few Furlongs of their remotest dwellings, and no further than the *Market*, which they constantly frequented: There had been more *folly* in this excuse. If they had said, that there was not *room* for them all in the *Lords House*, when they knew, that it was never *full* on *such* occasions, and that a great part of those that were invited would not come, so that they were sure to find too many empty places; the excuse would have been interpreted as a *Mockery*, and a *scoff* at the invitation. If they had told the Messengers, that they

they would not come, except they had each of them a *Chair* and *Cushion* provided for him, and might sit in *state* and *ease* at the Entertainment, this had been *greater* arrogance than appears in *those* Refusers. If they had sent the Lord word, that they would not feast with him at *such* or *such* of his Houses, that were *appointed*, and were most *convenient* for their reception; but they would have it *here* or *there*; at *home*, and *next* door; in places much less fit. *This* would have been a very *humersome* and very *rude* Answer to the Invitation. If further they had said, that the Feast began too soon, and that they could not *rise so early*, though the Sun was up many hours before, and they were abroad *every day earlier* about their other *Business*: This also had been an *Affront* to the *Master*, and a *contempt* of his *kindness*. But if these *surly unworthy people* should have been humour'd in *all particulars*, and things should have been *so* managed, as to have avoided all these *pretences*: And yet if after such *condescentions* they should have refused,

they

they had *confined themselves*, and given the *Lye* to their *Excuses*. But, if notwithstanding all this, they should have cryed out that they were *perishing* for *want* of *Bread*, and clamour'd and complain'd heavily, that Provision was not made for them: What could have been said to such an *impudent brazen'd* sort of *Hypocrites*.

Sirs, There are some among you that understand what I mean: I speak not thus out of *ill will* to upbraid any of you, but I ought to *mind* you, and to endeavour to *convince* you of your sins. What ever *colours* the *guilty* may set upon their neglects and contempts of Holy Ordinances before men, *God* will not be deceived or mocked; there is no putting Tricks upon him. If you will not be perswaded to your Duty, he knows the *reason*, and 'tis in vain to make *false flourishes* and *excuses*. Yea, sometimes *pretences* are so openly untrue, and grosse, that they cannot as much as hope to *deceive men* by them. Every one sees the *falshood* and *lying* of their *Allegations*, all their *Actions* pro-

proclaim that they do not themselves *believe* or *mean* any thing that they say, and yet they have the *prodigious impudence* to *lye* on in the *face* of *God*, and *Conscience*, and *Men*. So *seared* and *hardned* are some in their *perverseness* and *hypocrisie*, and act at that *rate*, as if it were a *Play-game*, and *sport* of *wit* to shew how many ways they had to evade their Duty, with some *shew* of *reason*. Sirs, When this *vile sort* of *evil men* have the Forehead to *pretend Religion*, they become the most *mischievous Miscreants* upon earth; and the fittest Instruments that Satan can desire or use for the Affairs of his Kingdom. But no more of them now.

Friends, I am exceeding troubled to see how *undutiful* to *God*, and how *unkind* to *themselves*, how *foolish* and *unreasonable* many men are, when they seek for *little occasions* to pretend, as *reasons* against the *greatest* and most *important* Duties; when that which would excuse *nothing else*, shall *excuse them* unto God for a neglect of his

Worship,

Worship, in the greatest Instances of it: An *aking Finger*, a few *Drops* of *Rain*, the *cold Air*, a Fit of *Drowsiness*, an impertinent *Visit*, or *such* like Trifles, are enough to be pleaded for *absence* from the House of God, and Holy Communion with him. My Wife was not at home, or she was busie, my Childs head aked, or I had Friends to Dine with me, therefore *I could not be at the Sacrament*. Therefore *I could not!* For shame false man! offer such *excuses* to thy *Master*, or thy *Prince*, when he commands and expects thine attendance; see how he will take them from thee: Yea, offer such but to thine *Equal*, that waits for thee on Affairs of Moment, and try how kindly he will receive the disappointment on such grounds. Dost thou use to say, *I could not go out to Market to buy Necessaries, because 'twas cold Weather; I could not go to Dinner to my kind Neighbour next door, that invited me, because I had prick'd my Finger?* Are such pretences too *trifling* to be used on such ordinary occasions, and are they enough for the

the *Greateſt?* will they ſerve to excuſe thy neglect of *feeding* thy Soul with the *bread* of *Life*, and thy making *Proviſion* for *Eternity*? Will they anſwer for thy not waiting on the Lord, the Lord of Life and Glory, when he invited thee to the Feaſt of Love at the Houſe of Banquets? What thoughts haſt thou of the *Priviledges* of the *Goſpel*, the *Communion* of *Saints*, the *peace* of *Conſcience*, the *joys* of the *Holy Ghoſt*, the *fore-taſts* of *Glory*; what, I ſay, doſt thou think of *theſe*, if they have not *ſo much power* with thee as the moſt acknowledged trifles? With how much *leſs* reſpect and devotion doſt thou *ſerve God*, than wicked men do the *Devil* and their *Luſts?* When *they* invite to *jolly meetings* and *communion* in *debauchery* and *beſtial madneſs*, do the *Blades* uſe to make ſuch *excuſes?* Are they diverted and kept off from their *brutiſh ſatisfaction* by *ſuch Nothings?* certainly they could not ſo excuſe themſelves to their *Luſts* and *vile Companions*. And do you pretend to be *Worſhippers* of the *God* of *Heaven*, and *Worſhippers* of the

beſt

beſt and *pureſt* ſort, to be *Chriſtians*, and *Expectants* of Eternal Glories as *Rewards* of your *Services*: And do you thus ſerve your Maker, *now* and *then* when the *humour* takes you, when the *Devil* hath no *buſineſs* for you, and you have nothing elſe to do? Are you not aſhamed to confeſs that *Religion* hath ſo *little* power with you, and that every thing can do more with you, than your *Duty* to *God*, and the *Intereſt* of your Souls? Do you *thus work out your ſalvation?* Do you *thus ſeek a Kingdom, a Heavenly Kingdom*, an *Everlaſting Kingdom?* Is *this the work and patience of the Goſpel?* Is *this running and ſtriving, and fighting, and giving diligence?* Is *this cutting off right hands, and plucking out right eyes?* Is *this forſaking all, and following Chriſt?* If there be any *reaſon*, if there be any *ſhame*, if there be any Conſcience, if there be any *ſenſe* of *God* and Religion in you, let not *ſmall* matters keep you from *this* your greateſt Duty and Concern: Make no more *ſuch vain* and *ſelf-condemning Apologies*. I know not whether

ther it were not better for you once for all, to say you are *no Christians*, than to insist on such *shameless* pretentions for your neglects of Christ and his Appointments. I add no more on this Head now; I pray God you may lay to heart what I have said.

CHAP. VI.

I Must now discourse with the other sort of *Refusers*, viz.

(2) *Those* that stand off upon the score of *mistakes* of *Conscience*. In applying my self to them, I shall consider the most weighty *Objections* that carry any colour of *Conscience* with them. And though I know many pretend *scruples* of this *sort*, when in *earnest they are not the reasons* of their neglects; yet because they *are so* to *some*, I shall take them to account. They are of two sorts:

(1) Such as hinder men only *sometimes* and in *part*.

(2) Such

(2) Such as wholly obstruct their *Communion*; and are pretended as grounds, why they cannot partake with us at *any* time.

Of the first kind are *these* that follow; *viz.*

[*I would not have neglected the* Holy Sacrament, *but I was not in charity*; such, or such a person hath abused me, and I was at odds with him; so that I durst not come.]

To this I say, That in such an occasion, thou art *seriously* and *impartially* to consider, whether thy displeasure were *just* or *unjust*, upon the determining of *this* will depend the state of the case. If,

(1) Thy displeasure were *just*, and thy Neighbour hath done thee *wrong*, and *persists* in it without *repentance* or *reparation*; 'tis no *uncharitableness* to be displeased or to think amiss of him. In such a case thy *anger* is no *sin*, so long as it keeps it self within *just bounds*. *Be angry, and sin not*, saith the Apostle, *Ephes.* 4. 26. They may be parted: And what is *no sin* cannot *unfit* us for the

Holy

Holy Communion. For that *Ordinance* doth not oblige us to be *reconciled* in our thoughts to *wicked* and *injurious* men, while they *impenitently* continue *such*: It will indeed require us not to *revenge* our selves on them to do them *wrong*, or to desire their *ruine*, or as much as *hurt*; but not to have *kind* and *good* thoughts of them while they continue *obstinate* in their *sins* and *injustice*: Otherwise it were in the power of every wicked person to *hinder* the good man from the *Sacrament* when he pleased. On such an occasion (I say) we may be *innocently angry*, and not only *pity* the *injurious* man, which many times is but a *proud*, though more *plausible* word to disguise our anger. And the person that is but *thus justly* pleased with an Offender against God and himself, is not indisposed for the *Sacrament* thereby. If this be your case any time, you ought not to permit the injury of another to do you so *much more*, as to keep you from your attendance on Christ at his *Feast of Love.*

But

But (2) If upon *examination* you have found, that your *anger* and *displeasure* was unjust, then the *sin* and the *wrong* was on your part, and you ought to repent, as a *preparation* for the *Sacrament*, which indeed is the propereſt *Inſtrument* to advance your further degrees of Penitence. There you will find *conſiderations* and *helps* for the *cooling* of the *heats* of your *paſſion*, and for the allaying the *boylings* of your *rage* and *animoſity*. I ſay, if you are convinced in your Conſcience, that your *wrath* is *undeſerved*, you ought to repent, and if you *do ſo*, you ought to uſe the *Holy Sacrament* for the *confirmation* and *heightning* of your *Repentance*.

So that the ſcruple of not being in *charity*, cannot juſtly keep any from the Sacrament, but *thoſe* that know they hate their Brother without a cauſe, and are reſolv'd to perſiſt in that hatred; ſuch as will not be reconciled to one that hath done them wrong, though he repents, and endeavours reparation. And *ſuch*, in effect, *renounce* Chriſt, and declare that they

expect

expect no benefit from his *Merit*, or *Mediation*, for the obtaining *Pardon* for themselves. If this be your condition, you may well be *afraid* to come to the Holy Sacrament, and you may as well tremble to pray, *Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us*. For this is directly *praying* against your selves. I hope it is not *thus* with any of you that make this exception.

But your Neighbour you think is an *evil* man, hath done you *injury*, and not *ask* your *pardon*, or sought your *amends*, you are therefore much displeased, and feel great anger in your mind against him, but yet are very *ready* to *forgive*, upon his acknowledgments and desire of *forgiveness*. If it be after *this manner* with you, you ought not to *abstain* from the *Sacrament* for *this* reason; but rather to address your selves to it, to *provide* and *pray* that your *just anger* may not grow into *malice* and *rage*; that you may not be provoked to repay your Enemy one injury for another; but that by the due use of those holy

holy Mysteries you may be more inclined to *forgiveneſs*, when he ſhall be fit for it. This I think is *ſufficient* for that *Doubt*.

(II) *But I have ſo much buſineſs fallen upon me, that I have not time to prepare my ſelf, and therefore I cannot come.*

In *anſwer* to *this*, I ſhall ſay ſomething that concerns, 1. *Buſineſs*; and ſomething 2*ly*. that concerns *Preparation*.

(1) As to **Buſineſs**. Doth your *Buſineſs* afford you time to eat, and drink, and ſleep, and none to fit your Souls for ſpiritual entertainments and converſe with God?

(2) Have you any greater, have you any better buſineſs, than to prepare your ſelves to remember the Love of your *dear Lord*, to meet with him, to renew your Covenant with God, and to receive pledges of his pardon and his love? Do you not reckon that this is *Buſineſs*, and the moſt important and neceſſary buſineſs; and

ſhall

shall the greater matters give place to the less?

(3) Is not much of the Business that hinders, needless? Have you not voluntarily involv'd your self in more affairs than it was necessary you should, or than your state or station in the world requir'd? Might not some of it have been put off to some other time; or might not the time that you spend in *impertinencies* be imployed in some of that business?

Ask your Consciences these questions; and know that what ever Business you take upon you *more* than is consistent with your Duty to God, and to your Souls, *that Business* is *your sin*. But if your *business* were not *voluntary*, but thrown on you by *providence*, the *doing* such *necessary Business* is *Gods work*; and while you do it in his *fear*, and with an eye to his *glory*, you are doing somewhat that is a *preparation* for the Holy Sacrament, or at least *that* which doth not by any means *indispose* you for it. And hence I pass to the Answers that concern,

II. **Preparation.** As to this take these two things.

(1) There are *Preparations* required to *Prayer* and *Hearing*, as well as to the *Sacrament*; *Meditation* is the Preparation for *Prayer*, and *Prayer* the Preparation for *Hearing*; and I hope that notwithstanding your business you perform *these* Duties: If *not*, you are to *repent* speedily of your neglect, and to take the *first* opportunity of the *Sacrament*, *there* to *confess* your *sin*, to declare your *repentance* and *resolutions* of *amendment*; to beg *pardon* for what you have *omitted*, and *Grace* to *assist* you in what you *resolve*. But if you *have perform'd those holy services*, then I say,

(2) That *those Performances* joyned with *Faith* and *Repentance*, are *preparations* for the *Holy Communion*. For when we *hear*, and when we *pray*, we do the *same* thing that we do at the *Sacrament*, though *not* with that *solemnity*; we *remember* Christ when we *hear*, and we do the same, and renew our *Covenant* with God, when we *pray*,

(in

(in which two I have told you the nature of the Ordinance consists;) so that these *acts* are *dispositions* and *preparations* for *that* which is the more *solemn* Performance. A *good life* in the discharge of our Duties towards God and Man, is an *habitual* and *constant preparation* for the *Sacrament*; and a *true Christian* is always *ready* and *prepared* to *remember* Christ, and to *confirm* the *Covenant* whereby he is a Christian. It is indeed very fit, that we should take some time before we approach the Lords Table, to call together into our thoughts the several great Instances of the Love of our dear Saviour, which we are to *remember there*: What *particular sins* we have to *confess*, and to *resolve* and *covenant against*; what *Graces* we *want*, and are more especially to *implore*. These things we should do, but they are not works that will require much labour or time, if we have been constant in the other *preparatory* Duties of *Meditation*, *Prayer*, and *Hearing*; for they do *habituate such* thoughts and resoluti-

ons to the Souls of good men. But if thy case be *such* that thou hast been an *evil* man, and *negligent* of all spiritual duty; but art now *sensible* of thy sin, and *desirous* to reform; *that sense* and *those desires* of amendment (if they are *sincere*, and if thou understandest the *nature* of the *Sacrament*, and Gods *Covenant* that is sealed by it,) are thy *preparations*. The *more time* thou takest, and the *more Prayers* and *Thoughts* thou imployest with other means, to make the *sense* of sin *deep*, and the *desires* of Reformation *intense* and *great*, the *more* thou art *prepared*, and the better things are like to succeed with thee. But if thy *preparations* are of a lower, and more imperfect degree (if of the *true* kind) thou oughtest *not therefore to abstain*; God will *pardon* thy *infirmities*, and *accept* of thy *sincerity*, and *strengthen* thee *so*, that thou shalt be *better prepared* against *another opportunity*, if thou art not wanting to thy self. But as to *this*, I may have occasion to speak more under the next Head, *viz.*

(II.) To

(II.) To consider the *Scruples* of *Conscience*, that keep some *off wholly* from *publick Communions*. They are either of *such* as refrain, because (1) they think *themselves unworthy*, or (2) of those that do it, because they think *others unworthy*, (3) of such as refuse on the opinion, that the *way* of *administration* is *unworthy*. Most of the considerable and usual doubts will fall under one or other of *these*. I begin with those of the *first* sort.

(1) We would come to the Holy Communion, but alas we are not *worthy* of so great an honour and priviledge; and we are afraid to come, because we hear, that *he that eats and drinks unworthily, eats and drinks his own damnation*.

To *this*, proposed thus in the general, I answer, (1) We are also *unworthy* of *common* Mercies, of *Meat*, and *Drink*, and *Raiment*; and of the more usual *spiritual* Mercies, that God should *speak* unto us, or that *we* should be permitted to *speak* unto *him*; shall we therefore *starve* our selves, and go

naked? shall we therefore refuse to *hear* and *pray?* In the *Sacrament* there is *something* of *duty*, and *something* of *priviledge*; when we are commanded to do a duty *reasonable* and *just*, shall we refuse because we are *unworthy?* When we are invited unto a Benefit *great* and *free*, and *necessary*, shall we resist it because we are not *worthy?* To do this is to render our selves *more undeserving*. When God offers Favours, we *may* and *ought* to accept, though we are unworthy of them.

(2) All men are unworthy in the sense of the Law. *Every man in his best estate is altogether vanity*, Psalm 39. 5. *We are all an unclean thing, and our righteousness is as filthy rags*, Isa. 64. 6. The meaning is, all men are Sinners, and their best services are imperfect and polluted. There is none *righteous*, no not one, according to the strictness and severity of the Law, which requires unsinning obedience. This *unworthiness* then is not a reason why thou shouldst refrain; yea,

(3) If

(3) If thou art *sensible* of this thine *unworthiness*, and desirous to be made *more worthy*, thou oughtest for *that reason* to come. 'Tis *such* that Christ invites: *Come unto me all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest*, Matth. 11. 28. *He came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance*, Mat. 9. 13. *Ho every man that thirsteth come*—Isa. 55. 1. *The Spirit and the Bride say come, and let him that is athirst come*—Rev. 22. 17. *Sense* of *spiritual wants*, and *desire* of *spiritual supplies*, is part of *Gospel worthiness*; and that which gives a *right* to the *Sacrament*. Thy being an *unworthy Sinner*, is not a reason why thou shouldst refrain, except thou art *obstinately resolv'd* to *continue so*. The *Beggar* is never the more *unworthy* of an *Alms*, because he in *rags* and great *misery*; nor the *sick man* the *more unworthy* of the *care* and *pains* of a *Physician*, because his disease is *great* and *violent* upon him. If indeed the *Beggar* loves and chuseth *want*, and scorns *charity*; if the *Patient hates* and *resists* the *Physitian* and his *applications*; in

such a case the one is unworthy of *relief*, and the other of the *means* of *health*. If this be thy case in *Spirituals*, thou art *unworthy*; and till thou art of another temper, I would not perswade thy coming. But if on the other hand, thou art *sensible* of thy *sins*, and *desirous* of *pardon* and *grace* to reform, thou hast the *qualification* that renders thee one that *may* and *ought* to *come*: And thou art *worthy* as a *Beggar* is of an *alms*, or the *Sick* of *Physick*: That is, thou wantest it, and Christ invites thee to come, and to receive *supplies* suitable to thy wants. So that if it be *thus* with thee, the sentence of the Apostle pronounced on him that *eats and drinks unworthily* will not concern thee.

But the Doubter presseth the matter more particularly *Knowledge*, *Faith*, and *Repentance* are *necessary* to *this worthiness*: But I have *no knowledge*, *I cannot believe*, *I cannot repent*; and therefore *am not worthy*.]

I shall speak to these *distinctly* and apart.

As

As to what concerns, (1) *Knowledge*, I propose *these* things.

(1) Perhaps thou art mistaken in the *Degrees* of *Knowledge* that are necessary. It is *not necessary* thou shouldst have knowledge in *deep* and *controversial* Points; no, nor yet in many *doctrinal Opinions* about *Religion*, that are *less speculative* and *nice*. It is not necessary than thou shouldest be acquainted with the *disputed* matters about the *Sacrament*, or be able to discourse largely upon the Subject. No; *Necessary knowledge is in few things*, and *those practical*. If therefore thou art instructed in the main *plain* Points of *Christian Doctrine*, and in the *great Rules of Christian Life*; if thou understandest the *Sacrament* to be a *Remembrance* of Christ, and a *confirming* our *Covenant* with *God*; and knowest those *easie* things I have before set down about it: There is no reason then why thou shouldst plead *ignorance* in barr to thy *Duty* and *Privilege*.

But,

(2) If thou art *really ignorant* in those plain things, thy ignorance is inexcusable; 'tis a great *sin*, and an argument of *prodigious carelesness* and *neglect*. For no one can *want capacity* to know things so easie, and no one can want opportunity to know things so *common*, and no one can plead excuse for not endeavouring to know things so *necessary*. If *this* then be thy case, repent of thy stupidity and carelessness that occasioned thy ignorance, and apply thy self presently to thy *Spiritual Guide*, or some honest knowing Neighbour, to instruct thee in those great and necessary matters. Be afraid and ashamed to live a day longer in such dangerons darkness amidst so much clear light: And till thou hast got out of this state of wilful blindness, meddle not with Holy Mysteries. But *this*, I hope, is the condition but of very few of you: Those that make the Objection, are mostly such as do it upon the *former* mistake,

miſtake, which I have endeavoured to rectifie.

(II) Want of *Faith* is pleaded. And to this ſcruple I ſay,

(1) Perhaps thou art *out*, and haſt been *miſ-taught* in the Doctrine of *Faith*. It may be thou takeſt *Faith* to be an *aſſurance* of Salvation; or ſuppoſeſt that it requires thy aſſent to *many* Principles, and *ſuch* as are *unreaſonable* or *doubtful*; or perhaps thy mind hath been *confounded* by *phraſes*, and *various*, *metaphorical*, and *dark* repreſentations of Faith; ſo that thou doſt not ſo much as know *what it is*, or *wherein it conſiſts*. Theſe all have been, and often are the caſes of many well-diſpoſed Chriſtians. The good man is not abſolutely *aſſured* of his Salvation; or he *doubts* ſometimes of many *Doctrines* and *Opinions* that he hath been taught to believe as *Fundamentals*; or his underſtanding is *confuſed* by variety of *odd notions*, and therefore he thinks he hath not *Faith*, and dares not approach the *Holy Table*. If any of theſe be thy condition, rectifie thy thoughts,

and

and thou wilt be rid of thy vain fears: Consider the matter *freely*; look on it in the *Light* of *Scripture* and *Reason*, and thou wilt find, that *those conceits* about *Faith* were *groundless*. Lay this down for certain, That the *plainest and most obvious account of it is truest*; For God would not make *that* the great condition of the Gospel, which is *difficult* to understand.

Now the *plain*, *scriptural*, *rational* Notion is *this*, *Faith* in the *general* is the *belief* of a *Proposition affirmed*; *Divine Faith*, the belief of something upon a *Divine Testimony*; *Gospel saving Faith* is such a *belief* of *Divine Testimony*, as hath influence upon the *heart* and *practice*, and conforms them unto it. If now we believe other *Testimonies*, but not *that* which God hath given us *by*, and *of* his *Son*, our *Faith* is meerly *humane*, and we have nothing to do with the *Holy Sacrament*. If we *believe* the Revelations of God in the *Gospel*, but *that belief* hath not yet had such *power* upon our *affections* and *conversations* as it ought, and as we

desire:

desire: In *this* case we *may*, and 'tis our *duty* to come to the Lords Table, to profess *that degree of Faith* which we *have*, and to *pray* for *more*; that it may be made *so strong* and *lively*, as to *transform* our hearts, and all our powers into the *likeness* of it, and into *his likeness* who is the *Author and Finisher of our Faith*. And finally, if our *faith* hath *already* had *this effect* upon us, we are to come to the *Sacrament* for further *confirmation* of it. This is the short and plain account of the matter, and if I should run it out into further discourse, this part would be disproportioned to the rest. If my brevity leave any of you unsatisfied in *this*, or any other things belonging to my Subject, I am at hand, willing and ready to give you further satisfaction. But,

(2) It may be the *weakness* and *imperfection* of thy Faith makes thee think thou hast *none*. In this case ask thy self the question: Do I think that *Christ Jesus* was an *Impostor*, and that the *Gospel* is a *Fable*? Thou start-

startlest and *abhorrest* these thoughts: Hence thou mayst be assured that thou hast *some degree* of *Faith*. But *that* (it may be) is very *small* and *low*: Be *that* the case; ask thy self then again, whether thou hast any *desire* that thy *weak* Faith should be *strengthened*, and thy *imperfect* Faith should be *improved* to greater and nobler measures? If thou art a person fit to be dealt with under this Head of *Conscience*, it is *thus* with thee; thou art *sorry* for *this imperfection*, and *desirous* of *growth* and *improvement*: And if *so*, apply thy self to the *Holy Sacrament*, as to the *proper means* of *growth*, and *remedy* of thy *imperfections*. *Here* thy Faith will be *exercised*, and by exercise it will be felt; so that thy doubts will be cleared: Experience will assure thee. And how thy Faith will by the use of this Ordinance, be quickned and advanced, I have shewn already. Thus to the Objection from the supposed want of Faith. But,

(III) The

(III) The good man thinks that he wants Repentance too: He cannot *repent* he saith, and therefore is not worthy. In answer, I take notice that,

In *Repentance* two things are considerable, *viz.* 1. *Sorrow* for sin, and 2. *Turning* from it to a life of Holiness and Virtue.

1. It may be thy *sorrow* is not so *intense* and *great* as thou thinkest is fit and suitable to such an occasion: Thou canst not weep and grieve *so much* for thy sin as the evils of it require; and yet thou mayest not wholly want the Grace of Repentance. *All* indeed are *Sinners*, and *all* must *repent*: But men are *Sinners* in *different* measures and degrees of guilt; and their sorrow and humiliations will likewise be *different*. *Deeper* Convictions and *greater* Agonies and Pangs of Sorrow may be expected from them whose sins have been *capital* and *notorious*, than from those others whose lives have been more *civil*, and less tainted with *ranting*

Enormi-

Enormities. It may be then thy Education hath been sober, and thy Inclinations not bent towards the grosser Vices; thou hast not committed any *horrid* Crimes, or *such sins* as look *gastly* in thy Conscience; and consequently thy Conversion hath not those *terrours*, and that *dread* in it, those melting sorrows, and violent expressions of grief that thou observest in some others. Though it be *thus*, thou hast no reason to be discouraged, if thy sorrow be *so much* as to engage thee to *humble* thy self before God, sincerely to beg *grace* and *forgiveneß*, and to obtain from thee *hatred* of thy sins, and resolutions against them; that *sorrow* of thine is *godly sorrow*, and part of true *repentance*, though it have not the greatest *degrees* of *vehemence*: These may be wanting on another account also in them that are truly penitent; their *temper* may be more *cold*, and their *passions calmer* than others are; and on this score their *resentments* less notable, and the expressions of them less eager:

eager: So that *violences* in *sorrow* are not always arguments of *true repentance*, nor the absence of them a sign of *impenitency* and *hardneſs*. If thou art ſo ſenſible of ſin as to deſire and endeavour to overcome and forſake it, thou art a *Penitent* in part, and thou oughteſt to come to the Sacrament for the ſtrengthning of that ſenſe, and to gain more aſſiſtance and more reſolution to ſubdue thy ſin. And if there be any real *defect* in thy ſorrow, repair thither, that it may be awakened, and excited to degrees more *becoming*, and *effective*.

But (2) The Objection preſſeth as to the other part of *Repentance*; *I cannot leave my ſin*, and therefore dare not approach the *Holy Myſtery*. But doſt thou *deſire* it? doſt thou *endeavour* it? If *ſo*, though thy deſires are imperfect, and thy endeavours weak, yet it is thy duty to preſent thy ſelf at the *Holy Table*. *There* thou mayeſt expect to have thy *Deſires increaſt*, and thy *Endeavours heightned* and *encouraged*. And how both the former act

act of *Repentance*, which is *Sorrow*, and *this* of *Aversation*, are promoted by the *Sacrament*. I have particularly shewn in the former Periods, to which I refer you for your fuller Answer to this and such like Objections.

Thus of the Scruples that arise from the first Head, the apprehension of our own *unworthiness*. I descend to another.

(II) Some abstain from the *Sacrament* because of the Unworthiness of Others; *wicked men* are admitted, and they will not have *communion* with *such*. Yea, they are commanded to have no *fellowship* with them, *Eph.* 5. 11. and *to come out from among them*, 2 *Cor.* 6. 17.

For the answering this, I propose these things to be considered.

(1) Hast thou taken the *Method* of our *Saviour*, Matth. 18. 15. with the Sinner, from whose communion thou thinkest thou must withdraw? Hast thou *privately* told him of his Faults? Hast thou admonisht him before *Witnesses*? Hast thou told the

Church?

Church? If *ſo*, thou haſt done, and he perſiſt ſtill in his wickedneſs, he will no doubt be *legally* excluded from *Chriſtian Communion*; and ſo the foundation of thy doubt will be taken off.

(2) How art thou *ſure*, when thou ſeeſt thoſe thou calleſt *wicked* come to the *Sacrament*, that they do not *repent* of their wickedneſs, and come to the holy Ordinance to *beg pardon* for their ſins, and *ſtrength* againſt them? How doſt thou know that they are not come to *bind* themſelves by deep reſolutions, and ſacred Vows, to a *ſpiritual warfare*, and a new *obedience?* Their coming makes *profeſſion* of *ſuch deſigns* and *reſolutions*, and how doſt thou *know* that *that Profeſſion* is *inſincere?* Haſt thou a way of prying into the heart?

But the man returns to his ſins as ſoon as he hath done, and *hence* thou wilt ſay, thou knoweſt his *hypocriſie*. This indeed were ſomething, if it could be certainly *foreſeen*; but how he will demean himſelf after the *Sacrament*, thou canſt not *foretel*; *This* may

have

have more effect upon him than *former Sacraments* have had. This I say, may be, and *charity thinketh no evil*, but *believeth all things*, *hopeth all things*, 1 Cor. 13. Or, if it now again prove otherwise, it is no certain evidence that the man *only* made *pretence* and shew; he might *then mean* and *design truly* and *well*; but temptations and his *lusts* were *too strong* for him, and carried him away against all his endeavours and resolutions.

(3) Thou performest other sacred duties, in which thou *remembrest Christ*, and hast *Communion* with *God*, in the *company* of *evil men*. Thou joynest in *hearing*, and publick *prayers* with *such*; and why mayest thou not be *present* at the *Sacrament* with them?

If it be pretended as a *reason* of *difference*, That hearing the Word, and Prayer, are *Converting Ordinances*, but the *Sacrament* is *not so*: I ask thee then, whether thou meanest by [*converting*] a *turning* men from *open Infidelity* to the *Profession* of the *Christi-*

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an Faith, and the *owning* of *Chriſtian Virtues?* or only *the turning* thoſe that *profeſt* this *Faith* and *Religion* before, to the *practice* of them? If thou intendeſt the *former*, the *Sacrament* indeed is *no converting* Ordinance; nor are the *Word* and *Prayer* ordinarily uſed for *ſuch* purpoſes among us, where the Goſpel is already generally profeſt: And thou doſt not bear the company of the wicked, of which we ſpeak in the places of publick worſhip, upon any *ſuch* expectation.

But if by *Converting* Ordinance, thou meaneſt (as is moſt likely) ſuch a one as God uſeth as a *means* to cauſe men profeſſing the Name of Chriſt to *depart from iniquity*, to *turn* from *ſin* to *holineſs*, and from the *power of Satan unto God*; I ſee no reaſon why any ſhould think or ſay, that the *Sacrament* is no *Converting Ordinance*.

If it be not, either 'tis becauſe the *Sacrament* is no *proper means*, or becauſe God *will not concur* by his *Grace* with it. *Neither* of *theſe can* be ſaid with

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any shew of reason: Not the *former*; for why should not the *solemn remembrance* of *Christ*, and the *Consideration* of what he hath *done* and *suffered*, be a *means* for the *killing* of *sin*, which he came to *destroy*, and the promoting *holiness*, which he *lived* and *dyed* to *advance?* yea, *what* can be supposed more *likely* and *powerful* for the promoting of *that blessed purpose?* why should not the *sign* and *seal* of God's gracious *Covenant* to give *pardon* and eternal *Glory* to all that forsake their sins, and live an holy life, be a fit Instrument to provoke those that understand it, to *renounce* their *sins*, and to *devote* themselves unto *holiness?* why should not that *solemn*, *sacred engagement*, that all that know what they do lay on themselves at the Sacrament, *to endeavour* to *depart* from every *known evil*, and to *practice* every *known duty*, be a *means* to oblige them to it? Certainly there is nothing that in the *nature of the thing*, seems to be a more *likely instrument* to convert men from a *life* of *sin*, to a *life* of *holiness*; than

than the ſacred *remembrance* of our Lord at his Table. So that if this *Ordinance* be not *converting*, it muſt be, becauſe God will not *concur* by his *Grace* in it: But whoever ſaith *that*, ſpeaks what he *cannot know*, and *cannot prove*; he talks *without book*, and *againſt* it; and is ſo extravagant in his Aſſertion, that it would be folly to attempt the confuting of him.

This I have ſaid on this occaſion, not to engage in a *Controverſie*, but to clear a matter of *Chriſtian practice*. And the very Root of this Objection lies in this conceit, That the *Sacrament is not a converting Ordinance*; For which there is *nothing* but *Fancy*, and the *bare ſayings* of ſome *miſtaken men*. But now, if as I have proved, the *Sacrament* may be, and is an *Inſtrument* to *Converſion*; then, why ſhould any refrain, becauſe evil men are admitted to it?

(4) If wicked men come to the Sacrament that are not *prepared* for it, their *unpreparedneſs* is *their ſin*, and they ſhall anſwer for it: But *we* ought not

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therefore to neglect *our duty*, becauſe *they* have omitted *theirs*. We may, and we ought to adviſe, and admoniſh them to prepare themſelves for the Ordinance before they come to it: If they will not follow our brotherly admonition, we cannot help it; we have done what we can to render them more *worthy*, and their ſin ſhall not be laid to our *charge*. To *prepare our ſelves* for the *Holy Communion*, and to addreſs our ſelves unto it, is *that* which we are ſure concerns us; If we neglect, 'tis *our ſin*, and *other* mens ſins will not excuſe us. *Their ſinning* in *one kind* ſhould be no reaſon why we ſhould *ſin* in another. There is no reaſon that we ſhould ſtarve our ſelves, becauſe others take the bread that belongs not to them.

(5) If we are *worthy* Communicants, and others receive *unworthily*, *They* have *no Communion* with *us*, nor *we* with *them*: *They only eat bread*, and *drink wine*; but *we partake* of the *myſtical body* and *blood* of our Lord. *Our Communion is with the Father*, and

with

with his Son Jesus Christ, and with the *Faithful*, *worthy Receivers*; but the unworthy *partake* neither with *us* nor *them*. If an *Ape* leap upon the Table, and eat of the bread where Friends are met at entertainment, Is he therefore a Guest? Is he one of the Company? If writings are to be mutually sealed there among the Friends, and that Creature catcheth up the Seal, and doth as the Covenanters do, is he therefore a party? He doth the same *action*, but not with the same *designs* and *ends*; and *these* make the *Communion*. The case is thus in reference to those ungodly men that *intrude* to the Sacrament; and the pious Communicants have no reason to think themselves concern'd in their company. Their *bodies* are *together*, but their *spirits* act and move *different* ways. The *Communion* is *spiritual*; and only those that receive as they *ought* have *fellowship* with *Christ*, and with one another. And this were enough to answer *that* Part of the Objection also that is taken from the *Scripture*,

where we are forbid to have *fellowship* with wicked men. But I add,

(6.) When Christians are prohibited wicked *Fellowship*, *Ephes.* 5. 11. It is evident that the prohibition concerns *Heathen mysteries*, which are there call'd the *unfruitful works of darkness*, because they were used in close recesses; and *vers.* 12. The Apostle saith, *It is a shame to speak of those things that are done of them in secret.* Christians were not to *communicate* with the *Heathens* in their *abominable Mysteries*: No, nor may they partake with wicked men in any *action* of *vice*, nor make them their *bosome* friends, nor be concerned with them in *other* matters more than needs; especially if they are *openly* prophane, and *obstinately* ungodly. But it doth not therefore follow, that they must forsake their Lords Table, and the most solemn expressions of duty to him, because evil men *intrudingly* present themselves unto it.

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And whereas Christians are commanded to *come out from among them*, and to *be seperate*, 2 *Cor.* 6. 17. 'Tis plain, that the persons they are required to seperate from were *Heathens* and *Idolaters*: For they are called *Unbelievers*, vers. 14. *Infidels*, vers. 15. And that they were *Idolaters*, is intimated, *vers.* 16. *What agreement hath the Temple of God with Idols?* Whence it follows, *Wherefore come out from amongst them.* So that this place doth not concern the present business; Christians were to *seperate* from the Worship of *Heathen Idolaters*, but it doth by no means follow hence that they must forsake the true *Christian* Worship, because *evil* men (who yet profess Christ) afford their presence at it.

And this may suffice for Answer to the Objections taken from the *unworthiness* of *others* that are admitted in *mixt* Communions.

Lastly, The *unworthiness* of our Way of *administration* is pretended by some, as a reason why they cannot communicate with us. I shall only speak briefly to two Exceptions of this sort.

(1) The *Sacrament* is administred among us in the way of *Forms* of *Prayer*, which they think to be contrary to *spiritual* Worship. And (2) *Kneeling* at it is required, which they suppose to be contrary to the first *Example*; and so an irregular posture of receiving.

To the *first*, I say these things, (1) Worship and Prayer may be *spiritual*, where *Forms* are used: For the *spirituality* doth not consist in the *invention* of *words*, but in the *due intention* and *ingagement* of the *soul*. If we pray in *faith*, with *humility*, *self-resignation*, and *holy desire* of the good things we pray for, we peay *in the spirit* though *by a Form*. And if on the other hand, we express our selves in *conceived prayers* never so *fluently* and *earnestly*, and have not *these dispositions* of

of Soul upon us when we pray, our prayers are *formal*, though without a *form*. Which of these is *fittest* in *it self*, I shall not dispute, but only say, that *neither* is *unlawful*, but *both* have their use; and add, that *one sort* may be *propereſt* at *one time*, and the *other sort* at *another* season; so that 'tis silly *superstition* to be devoted to the opinion of *one* of them, as absolutely to condemn the *other* as *unlawful*. In publick *Worship*, *Forms* have the advantage in securing the *gravity* and solemnity of it, and in *this too*, that the Worshippers *know* what it is they joyn in: But in *secret* devotions, *conceiv'd prayers* may sometimes *suit* better with particular occasions, and may engage the affections *more*. So that either of these may be used, as shall best accord with the ends of Prayer. And when the publick *Authority* of the Church requires the one, we may not *scruple* it, though we are more *affected* with the *other*; especially, since we may in *private* take the liberty to use which of them we think fit-

test. (2) *Those* that are most *against Forms*, pray *by them*, when they joyn with another that prays, though he do it never so much *ex tempore*: For the Peoples minds are not concern'd in *inventing* the *words* they pray by; the Minister gives a *Form* to them. And if you *may* pray in the *Form* of a *private* person dictated to you *suddenly*, and without *deliberation*, and which you do not know before, whether it will agree with *good sense* or *sound Doctrine*; why then may you not do it in the *forms* of the *Church*, compos'd by *wise* and *reverend* persons upon *mature consideration* and *advice*; especially when they are *such* as we *do*, or *may* know *before* to be *pious* and *grave*, suitable to Christian *Necessities*, and Christian *Truths*? There is no good reason that I know to make a scruple of the *latter*, if we admit the *former*.

(H) *Kneeling* at the *Sacrament* is not agreeable to the *first Example*; our Saviour administer'd to his Disciples *sitting*; and perhaps you fear

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there is something of *Popery* in the posture of *Kneeling*.

I answer (1) we are not bound to a nice and punctual observance of *all* the *Circumstances* that were in the *Primitive Example*: The Sacrament was first administred in the *Evening* in an *upper room*, *only* to twelve *persons*, and *those Men*, and *Ecclesiasticks*, or at least such as were *destined* to be so: But even the Objectors do not think we are obliged to act in the Sacrament strictly after the Example of these Particulars; and why should we suppose our selves to be tyed in the matter of *posture*, more than in those *other* Circumstances, in which we acknowledge to be of no binding nature? (2) The *posture* of those times at meals was not *sitting*, but *leaning*, according to the *then Custom* of the *Romans*. So we read *John* 21. 20. That the beloved Disciple *leaned on his masters breast at Supper*. And though the *English* Translation renders, *Luke* 22. 14. *He sate down*, and the Disciples with him; it is in conformity to our *phrase*

and *custom*, which is *sitting*: for the word in the Original [ἀνάκειμαι] doth not imply *that posture*, but is applicable to *any* other that is used, as well as *sitting*. So that if we are *strictly* tyed to the *original posture*, we must *lean* at the Sacrament, and neither *sit* nor *kneel*. But (3) the Institution hath not bound us to either the one or the other, but left the matter to be determined by the *general Rules* of *Decency* and *Reverence*. And since the *Fathers* of the *Church* have commanded *kneeling*, as the posture most expressive of our *Humility* and *Reverence* in receiving the pledges of Divine Love, I see no reason why any should boggle at it; much less why they should refuse their Duty, and their Priviledge, abstain from their spiritual food, and the solemn remembrance of their dear Lord, rather than do a thing so *innocent*, so *decent*, and so *reverend*, which the Authority of the Church requires from them. He hath but little appetite to his meat, that will not eat

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it except he may do it in such a fashion as is agreeable to his own humour.

I, but the Objector doubts, that there is real danger, and something of *Popery* in the case; the *Papists* use *kneeling* to signifie their *adoration* of the *Host*, and the Scrupuler fears there may be some such thing in *our* practice. But this fear is very *uncharitable* and *groundless*, since our *Church* doth so *vehemently* and *constantly* declare against the *Transubstantiation* of the *Romanists*, and the *adoration* of any creature; and since we are always told, that *kneeling* is required for *no other* reason than to *signifie* our *Humility* and *Reverence*: And though the *Papists* do express *more* by that posture, yet since our Church declares, that *this* is *all she* intends in reverence to the *consecrated* Elements, there is no ground why any should think *more* is meant by it. *Kneeling* signifies *Reverence* as well as *Worship*; and the *declaration* of the person himself is enough to shew

which of them he *intends*. But besides, though the *Papists* adore the *Bread* as the real *Body* of *Christ*, and therefore *kneel* before it, yet *that* can be no reason why *we* should *not* in this remembrance of our Lord *adore himself*: They kneel to him as present *corporally*; we worship him as *virtually* and *spiritually* present.

This I might urge further as a positive Argument for the *posture* of *kneeling*, over and above the use of it, as an Answer to the Objection. Thus, all acknowledge that *Christ* is to be *worshipp'd*. *Receiving* the *Sacrament* is the *proper Worship* of Christ; and *kneeling* is a *proper* signification of *adoration*. It follows that on this account *kneeling* is *fit*, and *fittest* to be used in the action of Communion. But I shall pursue this matter no further, what I have said may satisfie the *modest* and *reasonable*; and people that are set and resolv'd in their Opinions, will not be satisfied with never so much more.

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I should now draw to an end, but I am loth to leave you without some particular *Rules* of *Preparation*; *These* I shall lay down plainly and briefly in the ensuing Periods.

CHAP. VII.

THe Persons that are to come to the Sacrament may be distinguished into two sorts, *viz.* Either *such* as do *repent* and are *sorry* for their *Sins*, but have not yet in *any* good degree *prevailed* over them; or, those *other* more *improved* and *grown* Christians, who in considerable measure have mastered their Sins, and are endowed with many habits of Holiness and Virtue. The *first* sort are yet under the *Law*, *viz.* A state of *sense* and *conviction* of sin, but have not attained to the glorious *Liberty* of the *Sons of God*, or the state of power over them. But the others have

have arrived to that power in competent measure, so that *sin* doth not reign in their *mortal bodies*, because they are not *under the Law*, but *under Grace*. For distinction sake, I call the first sort, **Bare Penitents**; the second, the **Faithful**. Now the *Preparations* that concern *these* are different as their states are.

I. For the *Bare Penitents*, and *Sorrowers* for Sin, I advise them to *prepare* by the *Rules* following.

(1) Endeavour to make your selves as *sensible* as you can of the *evil* of *sin*; Consider it as an *enemy* unto God, and to your own happiness; as the *basest ingratitude*, and the *greatest deformity*; as a thing to be *hated* for *it self*, if there were no consideration had to its *effects*: Look upon it as the destroyer of your *present*, as well as *future* peace and felicity; as the enslaver of your Souls to the *Devil*, and that which debaseth them to the likeness and condition of beasts.

Aggra-

Aggravate such considerations in your thoughts by all the Circumstances that may render sin odious to you.

(2) Consider the *gracious* nature of the *Covenant* that God hath made with us in his Son; That by that *Covenant* he hath assured all true *Penitents* of *pardon* of their Sins, and *strength* against them. So that be our Sins never so *many*, or so *hainous*, they will be *forgiven*, if we *repent* and turn from them; and be they never so *strong* and *violent* upon us, they may be overcome, if we accept and use the grace that the Covenant offers to us. Represent these things duly, and frequently to your thoughts, and for the making the deeper impressions on them, collect those places of Scripture that speak so fully of the *Love* and *Mercies* of God, his *readiness* to *pardon*, and *desires* of our *happiness*, the *frequent* and *free offers* of his kindness; His *invitations* to Sinners to come

come unto him, and his often *bewailings* of their *obstinacy* and *hardness* in running from him: Consider that he sent his Son into the World to seek and to save *them that were lost*, to bring *Sinners to repentance*, to *take away the sins of the World*, to *deliver* us from the *wrath to come*, and that the *World through him might be saved*; I say, draw together *such* passages, *dwell* upon them in thy Meditations, till thou hast *fill'd* thy Soul with them. And then thou wilt find great encouragement to seek for pardon, and wilt be supported against those faintings and despondencies, that the meer sense of Sin, without a Saviour, might occasion in thy Soul.

(3.) After this, summon up all thy *Resolutions* against thy Sins; Consider thy *Baptismal* Engagements, how *just*, and *reasonable*, and *necessary* they were; Resolve to *confirm* them by *new Vows*. Content not thy self with some *cold* and *indefinite* inten-

intentions of leading a new Life *some* time or *other*, but endeavour to settle in a *firm*, *unalterable* purpose of *fighting* against *Sin*, and *living* unto *God*. Do all thou canst by *Reason* and *Religion*, by the *Considerations* of *Duty* and of *Interest*, to fix thy Soul *here*. And then,

(4) Be *earnest* with God *in Prayer*, to give thee a fuller sight of Sin, and *clearer*, *surer* thoughts of *pardoning* Mercy: To *present* thee with more Arguments to heighten thy resolutions, and to make thy Soul *more* capable of being moved by them. I say, apply thy self unto God by *Prayer*, *publick*, *private* and *secret* prayer, Confessing thy own vileness, acknowledging his Mercies, and resolving new obedience. And being thus prepared,

(5) Look on the Holy Sacrament as thy great *Duty* and *Remedy*; As *that* to which God calls thee, and the state and necessities of thy Soul call thee;

thee; As that Ordinance in which thou *art to ſeek* and *mayeſt expect pardon* and ſtrength, *reſolution* and *peace*. Conſider *this*, and raiſe thine *appetite* and expectations; for *they that hunger and thirſt after righteouſneſs ſhall be filled*.

And now when thou haſt exerciſed thy ſelf *in theſe acts*, and the time of the Holy Communion approacheth. Then,

(6) Imploy thy time in *awakening* and *affectionate* thoughts of Chriſt thy Lord. Conſider the *greatneſs* of his *Condeſcenſion*, the *kindneſs* of his *Undertaking*, the *holineſs* of his *Life*, the *purity* of his *Doctrine*, the *heavineſs* of his *Sufferings*, the *power* of his *Reſurrection*, and the *glory* of his *Aſcenſion*. Turn thy thoughts earneſtly, and often, upon *theſe* and *ſuch* inſtances of the Hiſtory of the holy Jeſus, and by them diſpoſe thy ſelf to a befitting remembrance of him at his Table.

And

And (Lastly) Gather up all thy thoughts and resolutions together, *viz.* thy *aperehensions* of the *vileneß* of *sin*, of the *Grace* of the *Covenant*, and the *merits* of thy *Lord*; thy *purposes* of leaving every evil way, and of renewing thy *baptismal Vows*, and say to thy self, Now is the time come that I must use *these thoughts* and *resolves*, that I may obtain pardon, and strength, victory over sin, and assurance of happiness: My Lord invites me to the great *representation* of the evil of sin in his own *sufferings*; to see his *Body wounded*, and his *Soul made an Offering for Sin*, in the *Type of Bread broken*, and *Wine poured out*; To remember his *Conquest* over *Sin* by *Death*, and a glorious *Resurrection*; To see the *Covenant* of *Grace* and pardon *sealed*: He invites me to *these* priviledges, and calls upon me to bind my self stronger in this holy Covenant, and thereby to make my self the subject of those Blessings it assures and conveys. I say, imploy thy

thy Soul in such thoughts, and bring them with thee to the Lords Table, spread them before him *there* in humble Confessions, Supplications, and Acknowledgments, and thou mayest then expect to receive the benefit thou art seeking after.

These are *Preparations* for a *bare Penitent*, that hath yet made but little progress in subduing of his Sins. And though the *highest degrees* of all these are not absolutely necessary to the coming of *such* to the Lords Table; yet the *more* they have been exercised in them, so much the *better* it is, by so *much* they are *more prepared*, and so *much more* they may expect of the benefits. But if your minds, that have not been used to *spiritual* things, will not fix long on *such* thoughts and Meditations: Engage them, as *far* as you *can*; proceed in the Method prescribed with that *diligence* and *care* that becomes one that is *serious*. And *then*, though your

your preparations be *imperfect now*, they may be *more compleat* against *another season*. If thou art sensible they have been so *defective*, maintain and keep up that sense, and resolve upon it, to endeavour to fit thy self *better* for *another* Sacrament, by renewing the *same* method, which will be *easier* for thee in the *progress* than it was in the *beginning*.

As for the other sort, *viz.*

II. *Those* that have *advanced* in the *conquest* of *their sins*; They are to *all over all the former Particulars*, that I have advised to the *bare Penitents*: For being yet *sinners*, and *imperfect*, they have need to use *that* method. And there are these few *other Directions* to be briefly added, that do further concern them.

(1) Call your selves to a *particular* account concerning your *sins*, examining *what vices* you are *most addicted* to, and *what* are the *sins* of your *tempers*, or of your *Profession*

fession and *Calling*: When you have found *those*, exercise *particular acts* of *Repentance* upon them, and renew your resolutions against them. Consider, that allowance of them is inconsistent with *sincerity*, and a state of true *regeneration*; that 'tis necessary you should oppose and subdue them; and that the holy *Sacrament* is to be used as a *means* for that blessed *end*.

(2) Examine *what ground* you have got *upon your sins* since the *last Sacrament*, whether you are now more *tender* and *fearful* of *offending God* than you were *before*; whether your *inclination* to any evil be *more weakned* and *mortified*? If *so*, take incouragement hence to *go on* with more Christian *vigour* and *resolution*. If *not*, *humble* your selves for your *unfruitfulness*, and endeavour to dispose your souls to make a *better* use of the *next* opportunity.

(3) Inquire

(3) Inquire into the state of your Souls as to your *Graces*; *what Graces* are wanting, and *what* are *weak*? *which* are *growing*, and *which* at a *stand*? and when you have found the condition of your Souls as to *these*, then exercise your *meditations* upon *these Particulars* in the *Life*, *Doctrine*, and *Precepts* of your Lord, whom you are to remember at his Table, that may be *proper* for *your case*. Apply your thoughts, and cares, and resolutions that way. *Design* and *resolve* to attend the holy Sacrament for the *supply* of those *wants*, and to endeavour to use it *so*, that the *needed Graces* may be *obtain'd*, and the *weak ones* may be *strengthned*, that *those* that are at a *stay* may be put into *motion* forwards, and *those* that are *growing* may be *further improved*. If you thus provide, and imploy your selves in the method before remembred, you will then be meet partakers of the *holy mysteries*, and may assure your selves of the *blessings* and *advantages* which they convey.

This

THis Subject would have required a larger discourse, but my *present* business was principally with the *careless* and *negligent*, to whose condition I have mostly applyed my self. For the *others*, that are solicitous for their Souls, and desirous to be further informed about this great and important affair of *preparation*, I shall advise them to get, and carefully to read and digest two excellent Books of the Sacrament: The former called *Mensa Mystica*, or a *Discourse concerning the Sacrament of the Lords Supper*, by Dr. *Simon Patrick*; and the *latter* named the Christian Sacrifice, containing most excellent *Meditations* and *Prayers*, both *before* and *after* the *Sacrament*.

In the *first design* of this little Discourse I intended to have added some things of that sort for your use; but while I was thinking of it, my Pious, Learned, and Excellent Friend the Author, sent me one of those his last Books, the *Devotion*

and

and *Piety* of which is extraordinary; and there is nothing that I know fitter to *prepare* your *affections*, and to excite them to the noblest height of *desire* and *love*, than those *Heavenly Meditations?* And you cannot use more *proper judicious* or *affectionate Prayers*, than those he hath annext. So that I was exceeding glad when I saw this useful, much needed work, so incomparably well done, that there was no occasion of my doing any more in it, than earnestly to recommend that Book to your perusal. And I intreat you to get it into your Houses, and from time to time to endeavour to warm your Souls by it, when you are *preparing* for the *Sacrament*, and by it to *fix* you in your *resolutions* of *living according* to your *engagements there*, when you have attended on that blessed Ordinance.

And now, my *Friends*, I leave you to the *blessing* of *God*, and the consideration of what I have said. Whatever judgment may be made of it,

I have this Testimony, that I *mean* it *sincerely*. And I shall never cease to pray, that both you and I may sincerely practice according to it.

Your faithful Monitor,

and Servant,

J. G.

Postscript.

Postscript,

TO THE

Citizens

OF

BATH.

Christian Friends,

BEsides the Writing of this Book for your Use, I have taken what Care I could, you should have it in your

Hands; *and especially those of the* poorer sort *that cannot* buy. *I was extreamly satisfied to perceive so good an Effect of those* Endeavours *at the last* solemn time of Sacraments. *Such* Communions *have not been here since our* unhappy Troubles, *that un-hinged all: And now give me leave to ask you,*

Did it not comfort your Hearts *to see something like the former dayes of* Charity *and* Peace? *Is it not a* blessed sight *to behold a* full Assembly *of* Christians *met with* one accord, *to Worship* Christ *their* Lord? *Is not the* Service *more* Solemn, *and are not our* Hearts *more raised? Are not our* Devotions *kindled by the* Zeal *of others; and our* Spirits *refresht by going to the* House of God in Company? *Is it not joyful to see the* mutual Amity of Christians *expresst there; and to joyn in* full consent *in remembring our* dear Lord; *joyntly vowing our selves to his* Service, *praising him for his* Love, *and waiting on him for his* Blessings? *Is not this more like* Religion *and* Worship, *than the* discour-

discouraging sight *of a few, scatter'd here and there, when multitudes turn their backs upon this* Feast of Divine Grace and Love? *Is not this more comfortable than living in a stupid neglect of a great known* Duty, *and better than running into* corners *after* fancies *and* unknown ways? *Is not* Religion *more honour'd, and* Peace *more promoted, and* Charity *and* Edification *more advanced, by a joynt* Worship *of our* Redeemer, *than by* Separations, *and proud* Singularities? *Have not our* Children *and* Servants *a better* Example *in such a* Practice; *and are they not prepared for* Reverence, *and a careful sense of* Religion, *when they see full* Congregations *devoutly attending upon the* Service *of it? Will not the great reproach of the* Reformation *be taken away by our* Unanimity *in* Worship; *and the* scandal *of our* coldness *and want of* zeal, *that hath turn'd so many to the* Church *of* Rome *on the one hand, and to the* Sects *on the other, in great part be removed, and our* Church *better secured in*

these dangerous days from those Enemies *on both sides?*

To these things, Sirs, *if you* consider, *you must* consent, *and I beseech you to weigh seriously the* Benefits *that will accrue to your selves and the* publick weal *of the* Church *and* Kingdom, *by an* Accord *in* Worship. *As you have begun in this, I hope you will hold on, and shew that it was not only a* Fit of Devotion, or *any* by-consideration *that induced you to it, but a* conviction *and* sense *of* Duty.

I have represented to you the necessity of perseverance *in* Religion, *and the* dangers *of* Apostacy: They that endure to the end shall be saved, *Mark* 13. 13. But if any man draw back, *God saith,* His Soul hath no pleasure in him. *'Tis a terrible saying that of the* Apostle, *which I wish you well to consider;* It is impossible for those who were once enlightned, and have tasted of the Heavenly Gift, and were made Partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good Word of God, and the Powers of the World to come,

come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again to repentance, *Heb.* 6. 4, 5, 6.

You have now solemnly confirmed your Baptismal Engagements, *and* sacredly *vowed your selves to* Christ *as his* Servants *and* Subjects; *what ever* imperfection *there was in those* beginnings, *take heed you do not account them as nothing: God doth not* despise the day of small things, *Zech.* 4. 10. *You are not to be discourag'd because you feel not any great* Effects *at first*; *the* progress *of the* Grace of God, *like the growth of Plants, is often by degrees, insensible*; *in continuance you will find the* benefit, *increase of your* Graces *and of your* Comforts: *But if you leave off what you have begun, you will grow worse and worse*; *more hardned in sin, and more averse to* spiritual Duties; *you will dishonour* Religion, *and the* holy Sacrament, *more by your* Apostacy, *than ever you did by your* former neglects: *You will offend and discourage others from trying those ways which you have attempted and left*; *and* wo be to

thoſe by whom ſuch Offences *come*.

But, Sirs, *I truſt, you, having* begun in the Spirit, *will not thus* end in the Fleſh. *You have ſolemnly profeſt your* Belief *in* Chriſt, *and* adherence *to him*; hatred *of your* ſins; *and reſolutions of* new Obedience: *And I hope you ſee no cauſe to alter your Minds: If not, in the* Name *and* Fear *of God, keep on in your* Attendance *on that* Sacred Ordinance: *Neglect no* Opportunity *of meeting your* Lord, *profeſſing your* love, *and receiving* Tokens *of his. The* Primitive Chriſtians *did at firſt every Week*; *and our* frequency *in the ſame* Duty *may contribute much to the reſtoring that* Divine Spirit *of* Holineſs, *and* Peace, *and* Love, *that was ſo eminent among thoſe* Bleſſed Saints *and* Martyrs *of* Jeſus. *I wiſh you would afford me* Occaſion *to deliver the* Sacrament *every* Month (*all the* Year) *as I do it during the* Summer-ſeaſon, *for the ſake of thoſe pious* Strangers *that are willing to uſe* ſpiritual, *as well as* natural means of health: *And I ſhould be very glad to meet more of you at ſuch*

times.

times. It would be no hindrance to your Affairs; *for* God *and* Religion *are never out of a Mans way. At his* Table *we seek, and may hope to find his* Blessing; *and this is necessary to the* Concerns of this life, *as well as to those of the next.*

And methinks every one that hath any sense of sin, *and remorse for it, should rejoyce there is such a* Remedy, *and have frequent recourse to it. We fall into* sin *daily, and thereby wound our* Consciences, *and lay in matter for* troubles *and* fears: *This obligeth us to repeated Acts of* Repentance, *and the more* serious *and* solemn *it is, the more* effectual *it will be, and the more* comfort *and* peace *will arise from it.*

Now in the holy Sacrament *we solemnly profess, confirm, and exercise our* Repentance, *and receive there* assurance *of* pardon *and* peace *with* God; *so that our own needs should urge us to frequent* attendance *on this* sacred Duty, *and to desire and earnestly to expect the* returns *of it.*

This, as it would ease those that are oppress by the burden of their sins, *so*

would it be an excellent preservative *against it. For nothing tends more to the* destruction *of our* sins, *and growth of our* Graces, *than often to examine* our selves, *to renew our* Resolutions, *and to implore the* Divine Aid *and* Help. *And to these* Exercises *the* holy Sacrament *engageth us; and therefore this is one of the most* effectual Instruments *of* Reformation, *and an* holy Life, *that we can use.*

Upon the whole, my Christian Friends, *let us all repent and be heartily sorry that we have hitherto been so* wanting *to this* great Duty, *and to this* Spiritual Interest; *and resolve through the* Grace *and* Strength *of* God, *to express our unfeigned* Repentance *for our former* neglects *by our future* diligence.

To assist your Devotions in it, I here annex some particular Prayers, *which those that are not better provided, may use as there is need. These I thought very proper to be added, because I fear many perform this* Duty *in a* cold, dead, customary

customary manner, *for want of some such* Help.

And now I pray God to bless these poor Endeavours *both to* You *and* Me, *and that we may be* encouraged *and* excited *by them to* constancy *in our* Duty, *and assisted by his* Grace *concurring with them to perform this* solemn Worship *with such* Sincerity *and* Devotion, *that his* Name *may be glorified, and our* Souls *comforted with the* pardon of *our* Sins, *and* peace *of* Conscience *here, and at length attain that* everlasting peace *and* rest *that remains for good men in the Kingdom of our Lord Jesus: To whom with the Father and Holy Spirit, be Praise and Adoration henceforth and for ever.* Amen.

Amen.

FORMS OF PRAYERS FOR THE LORD'S SUPPER.

A Prayer at Entrance, before the Holy Sacrament is begun.

MOst gracious Father, Thou inviteſt me a vile Sinner, unworthy of the leaſt Favour, to a Spiritual Banquet, to a Feaſt of Love: Lord, I am come upon thy gracious call; being poor and needy, weary and heavy laden under the burthen of my ſins, I come

come unto thee, O Lord, for relief and reſt: Help me to approach theſe holy Myſteries with fear and reverence, deep Humility, and ardent Devotion: With an Heart full of Faith and Love; ſenſible of thy infinite Goodneſs in ſending thy Son to dye for me; and of his inexpreſſible Love in undertaking and accompliſhing the work of my Redemption, truly ſorry for my manifold ſins; and throughly reſolv'd againſt them; and grant, Holy Father, that hereby my Graces may be ſtrengthned, and my ſins deſtroyed: That I may ſerve thee ſincerely and acceptably all the days of this mortal life, and in thy due time attain thy everlaſting Kingdom, through the Merits and Mediation of Jeſus Chriſt, my bleſſed Lord and Saviour. *Amen.*

A Prayer

A Prayer *while others are Receiving.*

O Lord, I praise thy Name that Thou art pleased to admit me to the Congregation of thy People, to be partaker of the Communion of Saints, and in that to enjoy Holy Fellowship with thy self, and a comfortable Earnest of that glorious, perfect, most happy Communion thou hast given us ground to hope for in thy Kingdom: Grant, gracious Lord, that I may thankfully and joyfully entertain this Priviledge, and be disposed by it to Universal Charity and Love unfeigned to these thy People, and to all Christians. And Lord help these thy Guests worthily to receive this present Token of thy Love, and make them and me such in reality and truth as we are here in this solemn Profession, thy obedient and faithful Subjects. Let our hearts be knit to Thee and to each other, that

We

we may henceforth live in unity and brotherly love, forgiving one another, forbearing one another, as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven us; being pitiful and courteous, ready to do good and to communicate; to distribute to the necessities of those that want, and prepared for every good work: That Gods holy Name may be glorified, our Profession adorned, Christian People edified, and our Souls comforted with the Peace of God, and peace of Conscience here, and finally rewarded with the full Enjoyment of the Love and holy Communion of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Another.

O Lord, Thou God of Love, grant that as we thy Servants are here met in a joynt and solemn remembrance of thy Son our Lord, in obedience to his Commands and Holy Appointment; so all the Mem-

bers

bers of thy Church may agree in the ſame Common Profeſſion of thy Name, and of thy Sons Religion; performing the great Duties, and participating the main Ordinances with *one accord*, in one heart and one mind, that our Diviſions being cur'd and our Animoſities laid aſide, the Scandals occaſion'd by them may be removed, Atheiſm and Infidelity may be aſham'd, all wickedneſs, *Spiritual* as well as *Carnal*, may be diſcountenanc'd, and true practical goodneſs advanced in the World: That Peace and Love, and all the bleſſed fruits of them, may abound, and true Religion in the power of it, may glorioufly increaſe; that the Profeſſors of it may no longer contend about *Mint*, *Anniſe*, and *Cumin*, but heartily and ſincerely mind the great things of the Law; and particularly the Law of Love, that *New Commandment*, that *we ſhould love one another*: That we may return to the Primitive bleſſed temper of Holineſs and Charity, and

frequent Communion; that we may shew our Faith by our Works, and our Love by our Obedience; and not spend our zeal and strength in disputing, but ingage the vigour of our Affections and Resolutions in holy living, and hereby express our affectionate remembrance of Christ, and prepare our selves for that enjoyment of him, which we expect through the Merits and Mediation of that blessed Lord and Saviour. *Amen.*

A Prayer *when the Minister draws near with the* Elements.

BLessed be thy Name, O Lord, that I was born in a Christian Land, and admitted to thy Church by Baptism, and have lived to a capacity of sealing my Baptismal Vows in mine own person: Lord, I heartily take those Engagements upon my self; I renounce all sins, the works of the Devil, all worldly vanities,

ties and ſenſual luſts: I heartily believe thy holy Religion, and ſincerely profeſs, conſtantly to endeavour to obey thy Laws, and earneſtly implore the aſſiſtance of thy Grace and Spirit to enable me to keep theſe Reſolutions; through Jeſus Chriſt my Lord. *Amen.*

A Prayer at the Receiving of the Bread.

LOrd, I receive this broken Bread, the Repreſentation of thy Body, in memory of thy wonderful Incarnation, and meritorious Sufferings, and vow by it, that I will by the Grace of God perſiſt in the ſtedfaſt Faith of thy moſt excellent Religion, and ſincere Obedience to thy moſt holy Laws, to my lifes end. *Amen.*

Another.

LOrd, I believe, help my unbelief. I take this Sign of thy Body as a Token of thy Love, and Seal of thy Promiſes,

Promiſes, to obtain for me the Pardon of my Sins, and the Salvation of my Soul, upon the terms of Faith and new Obedience: Lord, I ſtand to my part of the Covenant, and in full aſſurance of Faith, I rely on thee for the accompliſhment of thine: *Be it unto me according to thy word.* Amen.

Another.

GRant, O Lord, that this Bread of Life, receiv'd by me in ſtedfaſt Faith and humble Thankfulneſs, may refreſh and nouriſh my Soul, and be an effectual means of the growth of my Graces, and increaſe of my Comforts, till I come to Life Everlaſting, through Jeſus Chriſt my Lord. *Amen.*

A Prayer at the Receiving of the Cup.

LOrd, I remember with all humility and gratitude the Effuſion of thy precious Blood for me, and the Attone-

Attonement made by it : Grant me ſuch a ſenſe of thoſe Sufferings as may awaken a due abhorrence of my ſins, and ſuch an apprehenſion of that Propitiation, as may encourage my addreſſes to the Throne of Mercy for pardon and peace; and quicken my Endeavours in the ways of Repentance and holy Living, till I obtain the Bleſſings thou haſt purchaſed by thy Merits, and promiſed in thy Goſpel. *Amen.*

Another.

WHat manner of Love was this, that while we were Enemies Chriſt dyed? Lord, make me deeply ſenſible of this aſtoniſhing goodneſs; and enable me to expreſs my thankfulneſs by a conſtant and intire ſubjection unto *Him*, who hath bought me with the ineſtimable price of his moſt precious Blood, to whom be praiſe and adoration for ever and ever. *Amen.*

Another.

Another.

LOrd, wash me from my sins through that Blood which I here commemorate; that being deliver'd from the terrors of guilt and wrath, I may *serve thee without fear, in righteousness and holiness all the days of my life*, according to the Precepts of thy Gospel, which thou hast enforced by thy holy Example, and sealed by thy meritorious Sufferings. *Amen.*

A Prayer after Receiving in both Kinds.

ALL Glory, and Praise, and Adoration be given to thee, O Lord, for all thy Benefits, especially for thy Son, for his Life and Death, Resurrection and Ascension; for his Doctrine and for his Example; for the appointment of this *Memorial Feast*; for thy gracious Invitation of poor Sinners to thy Table, and for thy admitting

mitting me the unworthieſt of them to partake of thy Spiritual Dainties. Let me never forget this Love, or ceaſe to remember this dear Lord; but carry the thoughts of him and it into all my affairs, that they may regulate and direct the actions of my life, to the promoting his Honour, and expreſſing my acknowledgments of his goodneſs: That ſo at laſt I may partake of his Glory, and enjoy the full manifeſtation of his love, through his Merits and Mediation, in his Heavenly and everlaſting Kingdom. *Amen.*

Another.

O Lord, I have now once more, in confidence of thy gracious aſſiſtance, entred into a ſolemn reſolution againſt my ſins, to be more watchful over my ways, and to have more regard unto thy Laws. I moſt humbly and penitently implore thy pardon for my manifold breaches of ſuch ſacred Vows; thoſe at Baptiſm, and

and others since at thy Table: And now earnestly beseech thee to afford me such measures of that Grace, which thy Son hath purchased and promised, as may be sufficient to strengthen my natural weakness, and to overcome my powerful temptations; that I may serve thee acceptably, and faithfully, all the days of my life; through Jesus Christ my Saviour. *Amen.*

Another.

O Lord, Thou hast sealed to me the Covenant of thy Grace made to me in and through thy Son, and assur'd me of the Forgiveness of my Sins, the Power of thy Grace, the Light of thy Countenance, and the enjoyment of thy Love, upon the Conditions of Faith and Repentance. Lord, I most submissively praise thy Divine Majesty for this Grace, and wonderful condescention, in entering into Covenant with such a worthless Sinner; I for ever love and adore thy

blessed

bleſſed Son, my dear Saviour, for the Merits of his Life and Death, by which he hath ſatisfied thy Juſtice, and procured this gracious Covenant. Help me, O Lord, to abound more and more in Acts of Devout Praiſe and Holy Love; and to give conſtant heed to the diligent and ſincere performance of thoſe reaſonable Conditions which thou haſt required, and I have accepted, and engaged to fulfil: That I may obtain the Effects of thy gracious Promiſes, through Jeſus Chriſt my Lord. *Amen.*

FINIS.